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edited by
Stephen Spender
& Melvin J Lasky
June 1965 141
4s/75c

Beyond the Lobby
Ian Waller

Raymond Aron
Sartre's Marxism

Andrew Shonfield
Is Capitalism a Success?

Nirad Chaudhuri
India Past & Present

John Mander
George Steiner
Schoenberg's Moses & Aaron

Anatole Chub
The Mihajlov Case

Martin Esslin
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Encounter

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IS CAPITALISM A SUCCESS?	3	*Andrew Shonfield*
THE TWO INVENTORS	17	*Villy Sørensen*
ON UNDERSTANDING THE HINDUS	20	*Nirad C. Chaudhuri*
MEN & IDEAS		
SARTRE'S MARXISM	34	*Raymond Aron*
MUSIC		
SCHOENBERG'S "MOSES AND AARON"	40	*George Steiner*
NOTES & TOPICS		
AMERICAN AFTERTHOUGHTS	48	*A. Alvarez*
THE END OF SOCIALIST REALISM?	51	*Martin Esslin*
BOOKS		
INDIA & HER FRIENDS	53	*John Mander*
VERSIONS OF PASTORAL	59	*Tony Tanner*
THE QUENEAU COUNTRY	64	*Richard Mayne*
PRESS		
"THE LOBBY" AND BEYOND	73	*Ian Waller*
EAST & WEST		
MOSCOW SUMMER, BELGRADE WINTER	81	*Anatole Shub*
LETTERS	92	
AUTHORS	96	

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Andrew Shonfield

Is Capitalism a Success?

The Outlines of an Economic Revolution

WHAT WAS IT that converted capitalism from the cataclysmic failure which it appeared to be in the 1930s into the great engine of prosperity of the post-war Western world?

There is one simple answer which rests on a denial of the validity of the question itself. The economic order under which we now live and the social structure that goes with it are so different from what preceded them that it is misleading—so it is alleged—to use the word "capitalism" to describe them.[1] Since a large part of my argument is about the changes which have indeed taken place in the economic management of the modern societies of the Western world, I have some sympathy for this position. If, in spite of that, I have decided to stick to the old-fashioned capitalist label, it is because I believe that our societies continue to possess many characteristics which are inextricably connected with their antecedents in the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries; the word helps to emphasise the continuity. There are, after all, still large areas of economic activity which are open to private venture capital, and in these areas what determines its success or failure are the familiar ingredients: the amount of liquid funds available, the efficiency with which they are manipulated, the personal initiative of the controllers of this private wealth, and the enterprise of competing owners or managers of private capital. Moreover, the prizes for individual success are still large, and they convey on those who win them considerable economic power. The popular idea of "how to make good" and realise one's private dreams has not altered much; and this no doubt reflects the fact that post-war parvenu millionaires have not been in noticeably shorter supply than in other periods in the past. There is one further justification for the continued use of the word "capitalism," and that is that no one, not even its severest critics, has proposed a better word to put in its place.

ONE OF THE REASONS why people of my generation, brought up in the 1930s, have to argue their way through this semantic difficulty is that the performance of capitalism since the end of World War II has been so unexpectedly dazzling. It is hard for us to believe that the bleak and squalid system which we knew could, in so short a time, have adapted itself, without some covert process of total destruction and regeneration, to achieve so many desired objectives. In the early post-war period we were inclined to dismiss the high rates of economic growth in Western Europe as evidence of an effort of reconstruction, which was bound soon to come to an end. Then there was the Korean war boom in 1951 and the recession which followed it in the year after. Things seemed to be moving back into a familiar pattern. If they did not do so quite at once, this could be explained by the delay in catching up on certain amenities and improvements in living standards, where progress had been held back by the war-time and post-war shortages. Thus, in the years immediately following 1952, Europe experienced its first major boom in durable consumer goods, in the American style. So far it all had a highly precedented look.

However, the second half of the decade of the '50s, when the transient impulse behind the

[1] See C. A. R. Crosland, *The Future of Socialism* (Cape, 1956).

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prosperity ought surely to have run out, produced in the event a further sharp increase in West European output. Against the anticipated trend, the rate of advance slowed down most of all in the United States and Canada, where the exceptional activity engendered by the repair of war-time destruction and neglect had contributed least to the prosperity of the early 1950s. In Europe, several countries—Italy, Sweden, Denmark, and Switzerland—actually increased their output *faster* during the late 1950s and early '60s than they had done between 1950 and 1955.[2] Even countries like Britain and Belgium, which lagged well behind the European average during the period 1956–61, showed no sign of any reversal of the upward trend: they still maintained a rate of growth which was quite respectable by historic standards. In Britain, for which these were years in which the economy was especially hindered by "stop-go" policies, national production nevertheless increased at an average annual rate of 2·1 per cent, which compares with an average rate of growth of 1·7 per cent a year between 1913 and 1950 and 2·2 per cent from 1870 to 1913.

HIGH EUROPEAN rates of growth, especially in the early 1950s, were stimulated by the great influx of labour into industrial employment. Hours of work also tended to be longer during the early reconstruction period; this was especially true of Germany. But in the second half of the 1950s output per man hour in the twelve Western industrial countries[3] taken together increased slightly faster than during the period 1950–55. By historic standards the productivity increase achieved during the 1950s as a whole—an average for the twelve countries of 3·5 per cent a year—was quite exceptional: twice as much as the average for the whole of the period beginning just before the First World War, in 1913, until the conclusion of the main reconstruction phase after the Second World War in 1950.

Only the United States had achieved in its earlier history a sustained rise in productivity comparable to that of the 1950s. Throughout Western Europe the rate of increase in output per man employed was well above that of any earlier period for which records are available. By the time that the decade ended, it had become clear that Western Europe was reaping the benefit of a significant change of trend, and that the change was not simply the reflection of a full employment policy which had put more people to work.

The extraordinarily rapid increase in output per worker was accompanied by a mounting demand for more labour. By the end of the 1950s it had become normal in several European countries for the number of vacant jobs advertised by employers looking for workers to exceed the total of available unemployed persons by a large margin. The spate of immigrant workers who poured across Western Europe in these years—first from Italy, and later when this source began to dry up, from as far afield as Turkey—reflected something more than the European industrialists' search for stop-gaps during a period when profits were high and waiting to be made. In practice, the immigrants could only be brought in if the trade unions allowed it; and the trade unions allowed it only because they believed that the era of full employment had come to stay.

THERE WERE, OF COURSE, variations in the degree of confidence felt by organised labour in different countries. In Britain, for instance, there was a marked lack of enthusiasm for any positive immigration policy designed to fill specific gaps in employment. This was no doubt partly to be explained by the special circumstances of Britain's international position, and the official theory of the "open door" to all comers from anywhere in the Commonwealth. But it is hard to avoid the impression that the leaders of the British trade unions also felt less secure in their enjoyment of the new situation at home than, for example, the corresponding men in Germany. Perhaps the explanation is to be sought in the psychological effect of *uninterrupted* economic growth stretching over several years; this seems to be quite different from the mood of people who have experienced, as the British have, the occasional interruption of prosperity and the temporarily renewed fear of unemployment caused by their government's deflationary policy. The significant influence on the workers' view of full employment is evidently neither the size nor the duration of mass unemployment experienced in the more

[2] See Angus Maddison, *Economic Growth in the West* (Allen & Unwin, 1964), to which I am indebted for much of the data which follows.

[3] U.S.A., U.K., Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Canada.

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remote past.[4] Rather, the test that seems to be applied is the apparent steadiness and reliability of the new prosperity.

Perhaps more surprising is that full employment and the enhanced bargaining power of wage-earners have not resulted in the diversion of resources away from investment, which is heavily dependent on profits for its finance, and into personal consumption. In fact, the level of domestic investment, measured as a proportion of the gross national product, was notably higher in the 1950s than in any comparable period in the first half of the twentieth century in all West European countries for which records exist. Once again, the United States is different: there the proportion of investment was lower than during the period before the First World War (1900–1913). Indeed this simple contrast suggests the most obvious reason why the U.S. grew faster than Western Europe during the earlier period and more slowly in the later one.

THE SUCCESS of the modern capitalist society in reversing the pressures making for high consumption at the expense of investment is one of its outstanding achievements.

For years it was common doctrine among many economists that the Soviet system had a decisive advantage over the West because it could, and would, compel a much higher level of investment than was within our compass. No doubt it is true that in an emergency the Soviet rulers are able to squeeze that extra bit of savings out of their own people. But over the post-war period as a whole, the Soviet "25 per cent rule," whereby one quarter of the national product is supposed to be devoted to "new investment," does not appear to have put the rate of capital accumulation in the U.S.S.R. significantly ahead of the dynamic West European countries like Germany and the Netherlands. Most of the others were at or near 20 per cent of the Gross National Product (*G.N.P.*). Even the laggards of the 1950s, Britain and Belgium, have been moving up rapidly towards this level in the early 1960s.

How has this outburst of saving been brought off in these highly unpromising circumstances? In part it has been the result of *incentive taxation*. The high taxation inherited from the war and the immediate post-war period made the tax reliefs granted by governments, notably by way of generous initial allowances for industrial investment, an extremely powerful stimulus to plough back profits which would otherwise have gone into dividend distributions. Then there is the "forced saving," imposed by the state in the form of taxes, to finance the greatly increased share of investment for which it has become responsible. The wage-earners have also found, as their earnings have risen, that they have to contribute a larger proportion of their incomes to the improved social insurance schemes that have been introduced in one country after another. Several of these social insurance funds have accumulated large surpluses. Finally, increasing numbers of workers year by year have engaged themselves in contractual saving, often organised by their employers, to provide for extra pensions on retirement.

IN HUMAN TERMS it is the welfare aspect of the new capitalism which is its most striking characteristic.

Certainly, ambitious public welfare services are no novelty in advanced European countries like Germany and Sweden. These are the countries which have continued to lead in social experiment. But what is distinctive about the post-war period of improvement is not only its wide geographical spread throughout Western Europe, but also the speed with which the advance in national income has been translated into larger benefits for people unable to pre-empt a direct share of the prosperity through their own earnings. The duty to ensure that the non-earners did not lag any significant distance behind the earners was most clearly expressed in the German pensions reform of 1957. Under this, all existing pensions, based on each individual's earnings and contributions to the scheme, were to be upgraded every two years in line with the growth of national product—unless there was some over-riding economic consideration, judged to be so by a panel of experts independent of the government, which demanded that the adjustment be delayed. This German break-through to a more advanced form of social equity has influenced thinking on social security problems throughout Europe and has given a further impulse to the movement of reform.

The increasing dependence on immigrant labour, which was a feature of the European prosperity of the late 1950s and early 1960s, is

[4] This was much lower at its peak in the early 1930s in Britain than in Germany.

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unlikely to be indefinitely extended. At a certain stage political and cultural objections to this economic convenience make themselves felt. If the pace of immigration had been slower, it might have taken longer before these objections asserted themselves. But where a country like Switzerland, admittedly the extreme case, raises the number of its immigrant workers eightfold in the course of a decade, so that by the early 1960s *one-third* of its labour force consists of foreigners, the older inhabitants of the place are bound to feel anxious. Even the United States in the heyday of mass immigration did not change the composition of its society as rapidly as this! However, the interesting point to observe about the signs of a resistance to labour immigration on the scale of the early 1960s, which has appeared in other European countries besides Switzerland, is that it is not primarily motivated by any anxiety on the part of indigenous workers that the immigrants will undercut their wages and thus rob them of the fruits of full employment. No doubt this thought has been in the minds of individuals, but the important fact is that it has not been taken up by the leaders of organised labour, in spite of its attraction as a ready-made demagogic theme.

On the contrary, the fear of the more sophisticated trade union leaders has not been that wages would fail to go up fast enough—because immigrant labour or other causes acted as a brake—but that wage claims might be pushed up so high that either the stability of prices or economic expansion itself would be menaced. By the end of the 1950s they had become pretty confident that wage-earners, using the ordinary weapons of bargaining at their disposal, would be able to increase their wages each year in line with the growth of the national product. This has not, of course, been true everywhere in the West at all times since the war. Outstanding exceptions are Germany during the early 1950s, when the fruits of rising productivity were channelled into business profits rather than into wage incomes, and France during the late 1950s (after the advent of General de Gaulle) when real wages were successfully held down for a couple of years while the incomes of other groups moved ahead.

But taking the period as a whole the significant point is that prosperity has not depended, as it has done on some occasions in the past, on a shift in the distribution of incomes in favour of profits and against wages. In the short run, of course, there have been ups and downs in the relative rates of growth of real profits and real wages. There have also been longer term shifts in the use of national resources for particular purposes, *e.g.*, an increase in exports or a rise in the proportion of the national product going into investment, and during the period when such changes were occurring the rise in wage-earnings has lagged behind the growth of total national output. But it is observable that where wage-earners receive a disproportionately small share of the growth of national product during a period of years, as in Germany during most of the 1950s and in France in the closing years of the decade, this is followed by a period when wages tend to move up faster than the growth of national product, and there are widespread complaints that profits are being squeezed. They usually are.

Boom & Bust

Societies in which the innovating businessman has had such wide scope and the rewards from risk capital skilfully deployed have been so high, have also usually been marked by the characteristic overtones of entrepreneurial arrogance. Woe to the unsuccessful! Even the charity which is doled out to them is tainted with moral condemnation. In a period of economic opportunity the poor man must be actively discouraged from finding a way of opting out; the rich man must restrain his generous impulse....

Some of these sentiments are no doubt present, at least in latent form, in contemporary Western society; they come to expression more readily in the United States, where public welfare services are still not taken fully for granted. But elsewhere the concern about poverty has dominated the politics of the post-war generation. Parties of the Right and Left have competed with one another in demanding action by the state, of an increasingly subtle and sophisticated kind, to mitigate sickness, penury, or plain misfortune.

Full employment is not sufficient to explain the political phenomenon. Indeed, prosperous workers in well-paid jobs knowing that they can walk out of them and find others just as good are not generally in the mood to care overmuch about the problems of the misfits or the unlucky. There is some further factor which

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has come into play here. In part it may be the momentum of a greatly enlarged public service actively engaged in thinking about the problems of social amelioration and looking for opportunities for innovation in this field too. The professionals in welfare have exercised an influence on the politicians. However there are other influences too, more difficult to identify, which go with the atmosphere of the times.

In Western Europe, at any rate, the popular temper has surely been softened as a result of nearly two decades from which the experience of any serious economic disturbance has been absent. There have been business fluctuations in this period and moments when unemployment has temporarily risen. But it has rarely risen by more than an additional one per cent of the labour force; and the downturn in business profits has signalled no more than a short pause in the growth of national output. The "bad" years for France, Italy, and Germany have been those in which the national product has grown by only 2–3 per cent. In Britain and Sweden, which did on one or two occasions actually experience a reversal of the upward trend in output, the size of the drop from the previous peak to the deepest trough of recession was limited to ½ per cent of the annual *G.N.P.* Belgium had the worst record in the 1950s, where the maximum down-swing was 1·8 per cent. This was exceptional. No other West European country experienced a fall of more than 1 per cent in its gross national product. It is true that industrial output fluctuated more widely than this: activity in manufacturing and building work has been subject to some erratic movements on one or two occasions since the war. National output as a whole was only sustained by the greatly increased weight of non-industrial service expenditures compared with pre-war.

THERE WERE TWO PERIODS of industrial strain: 1951–52 and 1957–58. In the first of these all the West European countries except Germany suffered a temporary decline in industrial output of several percentage points; most of them dropped between 5 per cent and 10 per cent below the previous peak level. But the trouble righted itself fairly quickly and production began moving up again within a period varying from one year to about eighteen months from the original moment when the down-turn started. In 1957–58 the recession was much shallower (except for Belgium) and lasted a shorter time. Indeed, for most of West European industry it was a levelling off rather than a down-turn of the curve, and industrialists tended to act during the period of strain as if they were involved in a holding operation, not a crisis. Above all, the cumulative process set in motion by business recessions in the past—the drop in confidence and industrial orders leading to widespread dismissal of labour, and this in turn causing a further drop of demand and more dismissals—did *not* occur.

TO PUT this record into perspective it may be compared with the last previous period of Western prosperity of comparable length, from 1901 to 1913—still often referred to by people who lived through it on the continent of Europe as *"la belle époque,"* as if no further historical identification were necessary.

It was a period of rapid growth with only short interruptions; by 1913 industrial production in the advanced countries of Western Europe had increased by about half above the level at which it stood at the start of the century. If we take as a comparable starting-point the year 1950—when nearly all the West European countries had regained or surpassed their pre-war level of output—twelve years later, in 1962, their aggregate industrial output had doubled.

Business also suffered from bigger ups and downs during the 1901–13 period—although by the historical standards of Western capitalism they were far from violent. A calculation by Maddison, comparing the amplitude of industrial production in individual countries during the earlier period with the period following the Second World War, shows that there were one or two exceptional cases. France and Belgium achieved more even progress, interrupted by smaller industrial recessions, during the 1900s. In the other countries, the down-swings in the poor business years of *"la belle époque"* were bigger. However, it is worth noting that the recessions themselves did not last significantly longer; recoveries seemed to get under way as quickly then as in our own time.

What emerges from this broad comparison of the two eras of prosperity separated by forty years is that the relative performance of the dynamic countries which set the pace of economic growth in Western Europe—Germany,

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Italy, and France—was much better during the later period: they moved ahead a great deal faster in the good years and suffered from smaller fluctuations in the poor ones than a slow-growing country like Britain. But Britain herself, although lagging behind the others, also did better during the period after World War II than in the earlier phase of prosperity. In particular, the down-swings in British business recessions were very much milder than they had been during the Edwardian period of economic expansion.

THE UNITED STATES' EXPERIENCE, however, cuts right across this pattern. First of all, it was able to keep up a significantly faster rate of industrial expansion throughout the 1901–13 period than the Europeans at that time, in spite of the fact that it suffered from more violent recessions. Secondly, comparing the U.S. performance in the early and later periods, the pace of industrial expansion was significantly slower during the years after World War II than it had been in the 1900s. Thirdly, the U.S. had more recessions than Western Europe during the post-war period and they cut output down much more sharply. For the United States, therefore, the economic trend since the end of the war is by no means exceptionally favourable. On the contrary, it has tended to be more prone to business fluctuations than in good times in the past, and it has failed to regain the rate of industrial growth which it managed to sustain over many years before the First World War. There is little evidence of any fundamental change in the nature of capitalism here. And this in turn has led some Americans to argue that Western Europe's post-war economic success is little more than U.S. experience repeating itself. "Just wait until you reach our level of consumer saturation," they say. "Then you too will find that business fluctuates more and industry does not increase its output over the years quite so fast."

This argument lacks immediate plausibility, because there is plainly no scarcity of unsatisfied needs among the considerable body of the poor in America. If all that were necessary to raise the level of output were that the U.S. should contain a sufficient number of people lacking the goods and services which go to make a comfortable middle-class existence, surely the wheels of industry would by now be whirling round. A more convincing explanation for America's slow growth seems to be offered by a comparative study of the business cycles themselves in the United States and Europe. At any rate it seems likely that if the United States had had fewer business fluctuations and if its down-swings had been limited to the European average, the rate of growth over these years would have been significantly higher than it was.

The American Trouble

FIRST OF ALL, what were the causes of America's "extra" recessions?

In Europe there were two occasions when industrial production fell: 1951–52 and 1957–58. The first was a straightforward reaction, following the violent mood set off by the Korean war. Commodity prices had been pushed up to dizzy levels; everyone was trying to accumulate stocks; and meanwhile the order-books of one industry after another were over-filled by people desperately trying to spend their anticipated earnings in a hurry. When all this collapsed, an additional force was set in motion. Several countries ran into balance-of-payments trouble at a time when their currency reserves were at an extremely low level, and promptly imposed import restrictions. These put a curb on the exporting industries of some of the major European industrial countries. However, the American economy meanwhile remained extremely buoyant; the country was in the middle of a great armaments boom which continued into 1953. This—together with the measures undertaken by several West European governments to stimulate business activity and raise the level of employment—halted the recession and produced an upturn by the end of 1952.

The second post-war recession in Europe, in 1957–58, was of a quite different order from the first. It was not set off by any external political shock like the Korean war. Rather it was the outcome of a series of deliberate measures of restraint introduced independently by a number of governments at about the same time, following a period of extremely rapid expansion. Their common fear, after five years of uninterrupted boom, was that rising costs, particularly wage costs, would get out of hand. Milton Gilbert argues[5] that the recession would have come

[5] "The Post-war Business Cycle in Western Europe," *American Economic Review* (May 1962), from which this account of the business cycles of the 1950s is largely drawn.

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earlier if it had not been for the short Suez war at the end of 1956, which pushed up world prices and gave business a lift. It is clear at any rate that the down-turn of the business cycle in 1958 was not of the simple traditional type engendered by the spontaneous actions of businessmen, faced with markets which they judged had become over-supplied. The very speed with which these markets responded in 1959, as soon as some quite mild stimuli had been applied, suggests the contrary. Now that European currency reserves were in better shape and the governments themselves had become more firmly committed to policies of full employment, there was less hesitation than there had been in 1952 about giving a decisive boost to demand, once it was clear that industrial production was flagging. Again, as in the recovery from the earlier recession, a powerful expansion of international trade in 1959, deriving this time from the European Common Market as well as from the United States, put the finishing touches to an incipient boom.

Milton Gilbert sums up the experience of the two European post-war recessions as follows:

> In neither case was there the typical sequence of expansion becoming a boom which itself created distortions that caused the recession. In the 1951–52 case there were distortions on the side of the balance of payments, but these came from a shock to the economy from the political sphere. In the 1957–58 case there was not much in the way of distortions in the economy; restraining action was taken precisely to prevent their arising to a serious degree.... It is because the recessions followed from acts of policy that I think the term business cycle does not fit.

He adds, I believe with justice: "Had the idea of the business cycle not existed, it would hardly have been invented to describe the post-war fluctuations in Europe."

This is not merely a terminological point: it has some practical importance for the control of business recessions. The decay of what Gilbert calls "the business cycle mentality" in Western Europe means that even small stimuli on the part of governments, when trade has turned down, are readily accepted and interpreted by business as the signal for the resumption of the normal, vigorous, secular expansion. In the United States the average businessman's expectation that he may have to run hard for cover once every two or three years if he is to avoid damage has the effect of exaggerating any stresses and strains on the economy.

HOWEVER, THAT WOULD NOT of itself explain why there are more American recessions, only why when they occur they go deeper. The "extra" U.S. recessions occurred in 1948–49, in 1954, and again in 1960–61. Two of these are fairly readily explicable in terms of special circumstances which were present in the United States and not, at any rate in the same degree, elsewhere. The reversal of 1948–49 reflected the strains incidental to the post-war turn-round of a vast economic engine, which had been operating at full pressure on one set of tasks and suddenly had to find itself another. It was inadequately prepared for the event. And that was the more serious because the Americans could not fall back on the ready-made job of repairing war-damaged or neglected industries, which was urgently waiting to be done in Europe.[6] The war years themselves had been their period of reconstruction, after the epoch of rust and decay and neglect in the 1930s. The 1954 recession, too, may be seen as the reaction to an unusually abrupt change in political and military circumstances. As the Korean war ended, the United States cut back suddenly on what had been a rapidly expanding arms programme. In one year defence expenditure, which by then made up the greater part of the Federal budget, fell back by 7 per cent. However, the house-building boom of 1954–55, which was directly stimulated by government financial measures, and the record motor-car sales of 1955, also based partly on cheap credit, soon put the trouble right.

On the other hand, the 1960–61 recession does not seem to have been due to an exceptional set of economic circumstances visited on the United States alone. The contrast was indeed startling. The United States, which had for several years previously seen its output growing at a slower rate than that of Western Europe, suddenly found its industries moving into reverse at a time when the rest of the Western world continued to enjoy a steady advance in industrial production. In this instance the damage done had all the appearance of a self-inflicted wound. U.S. government policies, reflected in the Federal budget, posi-

[6] It is noteworthy that among the European countries only Switzerland, as unravaged as the United States, suffered a recession of any magnitude at this time.

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tively put a brake on expansion before the recovery from the previous recession in 1958 had gathered full momentum. In the second quarter of 1960, when unemployment was already more than 5 per cent, the government went out of its way to produce a grotesquely large budget surplus. The OECD, commenting on the turn-round from a budget deficit of $11 billion in the middle of 1958 to a surplus of $4½ billion two years later, judged that this $15½ billion drop in net demand by the Federal Government on available economic resources, equivalent to 3 per cent of the national product, "constituted a significant brake on the expansion."

Even by the end of 1960, when unemployment had climbed to nearly 6½ per cent, the Federal Government was still taking more money out of the economy than it was putting into it—with a budget surplus of $400 million. It is true that the central bank reacted to the situation more sensitively than the U.S. Treasury on this occasion; however, interest rates were still kept relatively high, by comparison with the level to which they had been allowed to fall in previous recessions, and the instruments for bringing about an expansion of credit were not used decisively. There is an air of sustained intellectual confusion about the whole affair.

It would be wrong to regard this as a wholly typical performance. The United States happened at the time to be involved in the unusual experience of a crisis of confidence in its currency, and this undoubtedly contributed to the floundering in economic policy. For the first time the U.S. authorities had to face the depressing problem of running an international reserve currency which the rest of the world no longer believed to be inevitably worth its official equivalent in gold. The anxiety induced by this shock and the desire to encourage the waverers among the foreign holders of dollars inhibited the use of cheap money policies; in particular, the authorities hesitated to cut the rate of interest, for fear that more dollar capital might be tempted to move abroad in search of a higher return.

IT IS PERHAPS significant that the only other country which suffered from a business recession during the early 1960s was Britain—the keeper of the other international reserve currency—which was also under pressure.

The trouble here started in the second half of 1961 and lasted until early 1963; thus it was extended over a longer period than the American recession, though the actual drop in industrial production was much smaller. The British ailment was rather like a lingering bout of influenza treated by old-fashioned drugs; the American had the appearance of a violent but shorter attack of pneumonia. It is possible to argue that the British would have cured their trouble earlier, perhaps in the middle of 1962 when Mr. Reginald Maudling took over as Chancellor of the Exchequer from Mr. Selwyn Lloyd (the originator of the deflationary measures which had caused the recession), if the quality of economic information available to the British Government had been better—say as good as the information available to the Americans.

It seems clear that one of the factors prolonging the British recession was a technical deficiency both in the factual material supplied to the Government and in its interpretation.[7] It was only when the effects of the business downturn became painfully obvious in the form of rising unemployment in the early winter of 1962 that the Government acted decisively to stimulate demand. Even so, the level of British unemployment at the trough of the recession was only a little over 2 per cent, whereas in the United States at the comparable stage it was almost 7 per cent. Allowing for the conventional adjustment of +1 per cent to bring the British figure on to the same basis as the American, the U.S. level of unemployment was over twice as high.

It would be wrong to press the analogy between the American and the British recession of the early 1960s too hard. In the British case the Government's commitment to full employment —which had come to be accepted as meaning a ceiling of 2 per cent registered unemployed—was clear and absolute. As soon as it became apparent that the ceiling might be exceeded, the machinery of government for creating more demand, above all in the weak sector of investment in manufacturing industry, went promptly into action. It was only because the recession could be plausibly presented as no more than a

[7] See, for instance, Mr. Maudling's speech at the Annual Bankers' Dinner, Mansion House, October 1962, when he argued on the basis of the latest figures of the industrial production index that output was going ahead very satisfactorily, at a time when, as subsequent information showed, it was lagging badly.

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temporary pause in the rising curve of industrial production that the remedies were delayed for so long. Indeed it was not until the winter of 1962–63 that the down-turn in industry, which had been clandestinely gathering force for some time, became fully visible.

What can be said about the behaviour of the British Government during the long period of stagnation from the middle of 1961 onwards is that it probably would have been ready to act more decisively, as well as earlier, if it had not been obsessed by the worry about international confidence in the value of the pound sterling. But at least it started off by being clear about its own objectives. The check to production imposed in the second half of 1961 was a deliberate act of policy. The British Government, starting from a position of very full employment, wanted to halt the rise in output and was prepared to risk an actual recession. This was not true of the United States. There the trouble originated in blunder. The only thing that can be said by way of mitigation is that the peculiar circumstances of the United States are such as to compound any such blunder and make it look worse than it would anywhere else.

THIS BRINGS US back to the question why American recessions seem to be deeper than those in Europe as well as more frequent.

The most obvious factor is that the Americans started their recession from a less favourable position—*viz.*, a slower rate of economic growth than the Europeans and with a bigger proportion of idle productive capacity, both labour and machines. A check to the advance imposed in such circumstances can easily tilt the economy past the critical horizontal position and point it downwards.

These are not mere metaphors; they correspond to the realities of business psychology in an economy where there is a lot of visible slack when order books suddenly begin to empty. Add a scepticism about the ability, or willingness, of the government to act promptly to stimulate demand, and there is the complete recipe for the "business cycle mentality." Indeed, in circumstances such as those of the U.S. in the 1950s, those who have the mentality most highly developed are also likely to prove to be the fittest to survive. Thus the process of natural selection in the business community adds a further touch of reinforcement to the currents making for a more volatile economy.

Plainly the special difficulties of the United States in recessions are bound up with its relatively slow secular rate of economic growth. But it may also be that the slow rate of growth is itself largely caused by the incompetent handling of business cycles. If the bungling of the recovery following the 1958 slump is regarded as normal, and it turns out that *any* vigorous economic expansion is habitually aborted in the womb, then the feebleness of the American average performance during the second half of the 1950s and the early 1960s would be readily explicable.

There is indeed one clearly identifiable factor which seems almost to be designed to interfere with economic growth during a business upswing, and that is the American tax system. Because the U.S. Government draws such a high proportion of its revenue from direct taxes on individuals and businesses—about 70 per cent of total tax—the effect of a sharp rise in profits and other income during the early stages of a business expansion tends to be offset on a larger scale and more rapidly than in other countries. The rapidity is due to the efficiency of the American tax-gathering system which is very prompt in making its deductions from earnings.[8] An automatic stabiliser of this power is of course a boon during a business decline. It means that a government has some room for manoeuvre before the cumulative forces of an economic recession tighten their grip. But it also works in the opposite direction—to stabilise before stabilisation is due, in a period of economic recovery. The tax relief proposals which President Kennedy pressed on a reluctant Congress just before his death in 1963, and which were finally passed with some modifications in 1964, were intended to undo the damage caused by this defective piece of fiscal machinery to U.S. economic growth.

POST-WAR EXPERIENCE SUGGESTS that the existence of built-in economic stabilisers may have an un-

[8] According to the U.S. Commission on Money and Credit (which was set up by the Committee on Economic Development and reported in 1961), the category of tax payments which moves up or down most sharply in response to changes in the national income is corporate tax; next in order of sensitiveness is personal income tax, and after that sales taxes, excise and other indirect imposts. All told, the Commission estimated that these taxes together offset between 33 per cent and 40 per cent of any rise or fall in the national product.

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fortunate effect on the making of economic policy. They serve to reinforce a mood of quiescence at the point where government faces a choice between different courses of action. This is especially so in the United States with its popular tradition of shouting "Hands off!" as soon as it looks as if the Federal Administration may be about to move in anywhere with a positive policy. The only exception is when there is a manifest crisis, as in Franklin Roosevelt's "hundred days" during 1933. Then the government is allowed, indeed expected, to interfere everywhere. But that is only on the theory that the body of the nation is temporarily crippled. As soon as it recovers its faculties, the nursemaid in Washington is supposed to be sent away to her normal menial duties in the back part of the house. The theory has not prevented the Government from intervening with good effect in post-war American recessions. But it has created inhibitions which have affected the speed of the initial reaction, and have impeded the formulation of coherent economic policy at a single centre of power. It is not, therefore, a complete surprise to discover that the average American post-war recession has plummeted down to twice the depth of the European average, before it has been arrested.

However, there are other differences beyond the immediate conduct of business cycle policy by governments in the United States and Europe which are probably as important in explaining the contrast in the results to date. It should not be forgotten that government policy in recession has only been seriously tested once in Europe, in 1958; the Europeans were very largely pulled out of the trouble in 1952 by forces beyond their control.

But if it is true, as I argued earlier, that recessions tend to go deeper if the decline starts from the position where there is a lot of slack in the economy, then one important area of enquiry is why the pressure of demand was kept up so successfully in Western Europe during the late 1950s and early 1960s—after the job of post-war reconstruction had been completed—while in the United States the natural push seemed to have gone out of the system. As Walter Salant said in a comment on the contrast between the American and European business cycles,

> ... Let us praise policy, but not mainly anti-cyclical policy in the usual and narrow sense. European countries have kept a good head of steam in the boiler at all times, whereas we in the United States have not.[9]

And he goes on to suggest that the emphasis in any analysis ought to be on "the long-run policies that put steam in the boiler and gave anti-cyclical policy the freedom of action it had."

The Argument in Brief

AN EXAMINATION of the extended period of prosperity which the Western world has enjoyed during the 1950s and early 1960s reveals three major factors which are responsible for the distinctive economic flavour of the period.

First, economic growth has been much *steadier* than in the past. It has not been completely even, but the recessions, when they have come, have been very mild and shallow by historical standards. In several countries they have resulted in nothing more than the temporary slowing down of a continuing advance. There has been no halt or reversal. In others, where production has fallen back in recessions, these interruptions have been short-lived and have had relatively little effect on the level of employment.

Secondly, the growth of production over the period has been extremely *rapid*. It is true that in the United States there have been periods in the past, notably from 1900 to 1913, when the average rate of economic growth was even higher than in the 1950s. But the American case was exceptional in the post-war Western world.[10] It was accompanied by many features which had no parallel elsewhere—notably a rising level of unemployment and a declining level of business investment, measured as a proportion of the national product. In Western Europe the pace of economic advance after the middle of the century was much faster, as well as being less interrupted, than in any known comparable period of peace-time history.

Thirdly, the benefits of the new prosperity were very *widely diffused*. In the conditions of full employment and rising demand for labour established in almost all areas of Western Europe during the 1950s, average wage earnings rose as fast as, or faster than, the national pro-

[9] *American Economic Review* (May 1962).

[10] Canada is regarded for the purposes of this argument as part of the North American complex, inextricably linked with the U.S. economy.

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duct. In the United States too, consumption rose fairly steadily and the upward trend was barely interrupted even by business recessions. What distinguished Western Europe was the deliberate effort to widen the spread of consumer benefits, by means of welfare services and pensions schemes, to those members of society who cannot rely on automatic gains as a result of the rise in wage earnings.

It is noteworthy that this diffusion of rising incomes over the population as a whole has not reduced the flow of savings required to support a high level of investment. On the contrary, Western Europe has set aside a larger proportion of its resources to investment than ever before. Again the United States is different: there the rate of investment was somewhat lower than in the period of expansion immediately preceding the First World War. One of the aims of the Democratic Administration which took office in 1961 was to raise the level of American investment, with the help of fiscal incentives and the promise of sustained economic expansion uninterrupted by serious recessions.

The evidence suggests that a continuing "recession psychology" in the United States has been a major reason for the contrast between American and West European economic experience in recent years. Analysis of the actual recessions which have occurred since the war suggests that they have been aggravated in the United States by government financial policies. There have been more recessions in the United States than in Western Europe, and they have been allowed to go further before the government intervened decisively to boost demand.

THERE IS an alternative explanation of the post-war contrast between North America and Western Europe, which sees the latter as enjoying an exceptional and transient expansion while the former is closer to the long-term economic norm. An important school of economic historians argues on the basis of the experience of the past century that the favourable conditions from 1950 onwards reflected a "long upswing" (of about ten years' duration) of a kind which has been seen regularly, alternating with downswings of about equal duration, in the past. On this view there has been no decisive change of trend in the Western capitalist world leading to a sustained high rate of economic growth. The reason why appearances suggest that there has been is that a number of extremely favourable conditions have fortuitously combined to accelerate expansion in the 1950s; the lucky combination is unlikely to endure.

Two powerful economic forces have played a major part in raising the tempo of economic growth in the West. They are: (1) the sustained expansion of international trade, and (2) the great building boom of the 1950s. Some economists, among whom Simon Kuznets and Arthur Lewis are outstanding, maintain that these are transient phenomena; both residential building and international trade in manufactured goods are believed to have been subjected to a species of forced growth, which will be matched by a markedly slower rate of expansion later on.

My central thesis is that there is no reason to suppose that the patterns of the past, which have been ingeniously unravelled by the historians of trade cycles, will reassert themselves in the future. To begin with, the advent of full employment, and its conscious pursuit in the advanced industrial countries as an act of policy, have added a new dimension to international trade. When countries are operating constantly at the margin of their available resources, their imports of manufactured goods tend to rise faster than their domestic output of manufactures. This tendency is particularly marked during a period of rapidly advancing technology.

The distinctive features of the new era of capitalism which has opened since the end of the Second World War are the conscious pursuit of full employment, and the accelerated pace of technological progress. The latter has made possible a high and steady increase from year to year in output per man-hour. This process will continue and may accelerate.

The rapid expansion of international trade is not a necessary condition for prosperity and full employment; but it makes it possible to achieve these ends in much greater comfort. Autarkic policies have awkward by-products, including an excessive amount of policing which generally goes with a system of tight economic controls. The level of prosperity, too, will tend to be higher when more trade flows. If imports are not impeded by quota restrictions or high tariffs, the very rapidity of the technological advance and the need to exploit transient opportunities before end-products or novel techniques become obsolescent will act as a powerful engine increasing the volume of international trade. At

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the same time, international trade in advanced capital goods and new products, like chemicals, will itself tend to accelerate the rise in productivity. And that will help to maintain the expansion of output in the advanced nations, even when labour for new jobs is short.

The early stages of the new capitalism were sustained in several countries with the help of ample supplies of additional labour moving into industry. The 1960s show a marked change in the trend. This has reinforced the emphasis on technological innovation in general and on higher education in particular.

Keynes & After

THUS FAR the argument has tried to show only that continuing prosperity and uninterrupted growth on the scale of recent years are possible in the future. The underlying conditions in the second half of the 20th century are more favourable than at any time in the history of capitalism. The more interesting question, however, is whether success is probable.

The answer to this depends very largely on political will and skill: specifically on the management of the institutional apparatus which guides Western economic life.

There is an alternative approach which sees this whole issue as a technical problem, and one that was solved some time ago as a result of the advance in economic techniques. Once Keynes showed how an economy should be handled when it showed the recurrent signs of debility, there was little more to it, it is averred, than following the instructions in the new guide-book. You might find yourself with a little more inflation than you had bargained for, but you could always rely on having plenty of economic growth. Now the curious thing is that Keynes was remarkably uninterested in the process of growth. Indeed, he held the strange view that ordinary people's wants in the advanced Western societies were so near to being satiated that it would be necessary, after only a few years of full employment, to proceed to quite extraordinary devices—for example, establishing a rate of interest of zero per cent—in order to keep economic activity going.

Keynes' view was limited by his essential preoccupation with the problem of how to provide employment for more people, using a given stock of productive assets. Additions to the stock were important in so far as the act of investment itself would employ additional labour. As Schumpeter put it, the theory was chiefly concerned with "an analysis of the factors that determine the higher or lower degree of utilisation of an existing industrial apparatus." That was natural enough, given the overwhelming human problem of mass unemployment in the depression years of the 1930s; but it resulted in some narrowing of the intellectual horizon. The problems of capitalism in the 1930s—how to bring a given production apparatus into full use—were not typical of the periods of capitalism which preceded or succeeded it. Schumpeter concludes:[11]

> Those who look for the essence of capitalism in the phenomena that attend the incessant recreation of this apparatus and the incessant revolution that goes on within it must therefore be excused if they hold that Keynes' theory abstracts from the essence of the capitalist process.

This is not to deny that the control over the business cycle, which owes so much to Keynes' work, has been one of the decisive factors in establishing the dynamic and prosperous capitalism of the post-war era. Indeed it is probably the single most important factor in this change. So many other developments flow from it, notably the reduction of business risks and the incentive to speed up the process of investment. My point is only that if the change from old-style capitalism to the new style had depended solely on a process of intellectual conversion to the system of economic doctrines developed by Keynes, it is unlikely that it would have got as far as it has. Moreover, the future would by now be looking highly uncertain. After all, there have been many occasions since the war when we have seen people in authority, who believe themselves to have penetrated the truths of Keynesian economics, being guided in an emergency by quite other, and often contradictory, policies.

WHAT IS CHARACTERISTIC of the post-war period is that a variety of independent forces have combined to increase the available powers of control over the economic system and at the same time to keep the volume of demand constantly at a very high level. Governments have therefore been given time to learn how to intervene with

[11] *History of Economic Analysis* (Allen & Unwin, 1954).

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increasing skill, without causing disaster in the course of educating themselves.

There is, indeed, an element of paradox in the fact that the two nations which had earliest and most readily absorbed the Keynesian message—Britain and the United States—were also the least successful among the Western capitalist countries in managing their economies after World War II. This contrast would itself be sufficient to suggest that the purely intellectual change, which is popularly labelled the "Keynesian revolution," is not the decisive factor. Something more is evidently required than a knowledge of techniques. On the continent of Europe during the period immediately following the war, the Keynesian message was not generally accepted. Yet there were other more powerful factors which allowed these countries to avoid any serious cyclical fluctuations and to maintain a significantly higher rate of economic growth than either Britain or the United States.

This success of the continental Europeans was so glaring that by the early 1960s it had become a significant factor in both British and American domestic politics. At any rate both countries embarked on policies which were intended to mark a deliberate break with the past, while copying some feature, real or imagined, of the European experience. In Britain the effort was concentrated on avoiding "stop-go" measures, which had interfered with an even rate of growth; the formula adopted was economic planning on the French model which by making progress more even would also, it was expected, make it more rapid. In the United States, after the Democratic Administration took office in 1961, following eight years of Republican rule, the whole focus of economic policy shifted: it came to concentrate on the objective of full employment, which was to be achieved by deliberately pushing up the demands on the country's productive apparatus.

It is worth noting that when the United States came to set itself its new objective, it did not turn to Britain for its model, despite the fact that the British had successfully maintained a state of full employment, without interruption, for two decades. It was the experience of continental Europe in the 1950s which beckoned to the Americans. What had been achieved there was the combination of full employment with a high rate of growth and international competitive power which had notably eluded the British.

THERE ARE characteristic institutional features of the economic order which have gradually emerged in post-war capitalism. Plainly there are big differences between the key institutions and economic methods of one country and another. The differences are often the subject of sharp ideological cleavages. Yet when the total picture is examined, there is a certain uniformity in the texture of these societies. In terms of what they *do*—rather than of what they *say* about it—and even more markedly in terms of the pattern of their behaviour over a period of years, the similarities are striking. This may be because nations exchange their experiences nowadays, including the intimate experiences of management both in the public sphere and in business, more actively than ever before. That may also be one of the reasons why the design of the pattern has become clearer in the 1960s than it was in the 1950s.

Some of its outstanding features may be usefully listed:

1. There is the vastly increased *influence of the public authorities* on the management of the economic system. This operates through different mechanisms in different countries: in one the control of the banking system is decisive, in another it is the existence of a wide sector of publicly-controlled enterprise. In all of them the government's expenditure has been enormously enlarged and determines directly a large segment of each nation's economic activities.

2. The preoccupation with *social welfare* leads to the use of public funds on a rising scale, most notably to support people who do not earn, either because they are young and being educated or old and retired. Public welfare policies, of course, have a long history in several European countries. What is, however, characteristic of the post-war period is the steady advance of social welfare measures over wide areas of the Western world. This is most obviously reflected in the fact that education and pensions together have been absorbing an increasing proportion of the national income of the advanced capitalist countries. (Again a proviso must be made about the United States in the 1950s.)

3. In the private sector *the violence of the market* has been tamed. Competition, although it continues to be active in a number of areas, tends to be increasingly regulated and controlled. The effort to secure an enlarged area of

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predictability for business management, in a period in which technological change is very rapid and individual business investments are both larger in size and take longer to mature, has encouraged long-range collaboration between firms. Governments in their anxiety to increase the area of the predictable for purposes of economic planning have encouraged firms within an industry to evolve agreed policies on the basis of their common long-range interests. The "classical market" of the textbooks in which firms struggle with one another and disregard any possible effect that their actions may have on the market as a whole has become more remote than ever.

4. It has now come to be taken for granted both by governments and by the average person in the Western capitalist countries that each year should bring a noticeable *increase in the real income* per head of the population. The accepted procedure of annual wage claims in most countries reflects this expectation. It is, in fact, capable of being fulfilled, at any rate for a long time to come, as a result of the accelerated pace of technological innovation in industry. But to secure the full benefits of the enlarged industrial potential requires new forms of organisation: (*a*) in the sphere of research and development, and (*b*) for the training of workers and generally for the more efficient deployment of scarce resources of skilled manpower. A conscious effort has begun to be applied in both fields since the late 1950s. The purpose of (*a*) is to reduce the time span from the inception of novel ideas to their development into usable models ready to be absorbed into the process of production; while (*b*) aims to reduce the bottlenecks caused by the shortage of trained labour required by the advance of technology. There is increasing realisation that in a full-employment economy, rapid technical progress can be sustained only if there is an active public policy designed to speed up the transfer of people from jobs in which they are established to new forms of employment.

5. The characteristic attitude in large-scale economic management, both inside government and in the private sector, which has made itself increasingly felt during the post-war period, is *the pursuit of intellectual coherence*. Its most obvious manifestation is in long-range national planning. Lengthening the time-horizon used in making economic decisions also means extending the range of data that have to be studied in the present; more current facts become relevant. Thus the framework of systematic analysis has to be extended in two dimensions. Techniques and institutions, different in the various countries and varying in efficiency, have been developed to meet the demand for both explicitness and coherence in those economic decisions which have a significant impact on national production or public welfare. Once again the motive is at least partly the desire, in the face of greatly accelerated change, to try to reduce the area of the unpredictable to a manageable series of clear alternatives.

Finally, it remains to consider how far the methods being adopted for the efficient management of the new capitalism are compatible with the ideas and practice of traditional parliamentary democracy. There are two main questions. In what ways are the national democratic styles in different countries being modified? How much of the original objective of government by popular consent can be sustained in a system in which the sphere of active government has been greatly enlarged, and is likely to become more so?

(A second article by Mr. Shonfield will be published in an early number of ENCOUNTER)

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Villy Sørensen

The Two Inventors

THERE WERE two friends who were so close that they went to school together, studied medicine together, got top marks in the exam and fell in love with the same girl (who eventually, however, came to prefer one to the other). Until then they had been working on the same invention. But now their paths divided, and in the end each came to make his own. One of the inventions was able to make people forget everything they could remember. The other could make people remember everything they had forgotten. The remembrance-syrup, which was called *RE*, could be used with great success against loss of memory, split-mind and boredom; forgetfulness-water, which was called *FT*, could be used with equal success against anxiety-neuroses, depression, and overstrain.

But the marvellous medical inventions very soon had difficult legal consequences. Housewives who hadn't remembered many things for many years, suddenly came to think that it was not their husband they loved originally, but another man. Men who had been overworking themselves for years forgot they had been married for many years and suddenly began to carry on like care-free bachelors. People who had been depressed about not feeling themselves, instantly became themselves with youthful abandon, while those who found little joy in being themselves, freed themselves from themselves and all their old responsibilities. This led to much confusion and many crimes. The forgetful were then sentenced to take remembrance-syrup, the headstrong were sentenced to drink *FT*; and so they were back again where they had started. In order that it should not happen again it was officially laid down: no use of *RE* or *FT* without the knowledge of the law, and the practice of medicine came into serious conflict with the administration of justice. The inventor of remembrance-syrup, who was leaner and more fanatic than the inventor of forgetfulness-water, protested at such length against the public misuse of the new preparations that he was at last sentenced to take *FT* so that the case could rest for a while. His more portly colleague, who had a wife and child, stayed at home, until his wife persuaded him that he ought to support the former friend of his childhood. He visited him in prison, where he sat and appealed from one court to the next.

As they stood on either side of the bars, the inventor of forgetfulness-water said:

"Let us forget what there is between us."

"You are just the same as ever," answered the inventor of remembrance-syrup, breaking out into pent-up reproaches. He reproached *FT*'s inventor in particular for having invented *FT*, and for the fact that it should now be having an effect upon him. "Was that why you made your discovery?" he asked.

There came the reply that science is so impersonal that it does not concern itself with personal motives. Scientific knowledge advances from necessity, and so it is impossible not to make a discovery. If scientific knowledge becomes of benefit to mankind it is not the scientist who reaps the reward, and

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if it becomes detrimental it is not his fault. Even you yourself have protested against the public misuse of *FT*—and *RE*, he said.

Vehemently came the reply that the scientist doesn't merely live in his laboratory but also in the community, especially if he has both wife and child. Whatever is detrimental to man cannot be for the good. *FT* doesn't solve people's problems but makes them forget them, it serves by fostering man's reversion to an irresponsible minor, and serves those who foster this reversion. *RE*, on the contrary, serves man's awakening.

"But it undermines people's morals," said *FT*'s inventor, "and destroys marriage."

"Only the false marriages," said *RE*'s inventor, "*FT* destroys the true as well. *RE* confronts man with himself, *FT* makes man a stranger to himself and suspends the free will."

"You say that, who remind people exactly of what they *want* to forget. And you say that to me, who make people forget what they don't *want* to remember."

"Or what others don't want them to remember."

"That's not my intention. And how can you as a scientist talk about 'free will'? If there was such a thing, people would naturally be capable of resisting our preparations. What becomes of the will when one impregnates people's brain cells?"

"It is the people who impregnate them who have the will. You could have kept this invention to yourself, but you didn't *want* to. You would like to be just as famous as I am."

"Don't you like to be famous?"

"Rubbish! I should like to remember what it is like to feel. I had forgotten that while working at my invention."

"And I should like to forget all feelings. They used to disturb me in my work on my invention. You see, I was working for the sake of the thing itself. You were working for your own sake."

"But your interest in the thing itself didn't go so far as to take *FT* yourself—as I took *RE*."

"That's your misfortune. When you first take *FT* you will be a happy man."

"But you probably consider yourself lucky because you are not going to be forced to take *FT* yourself."

"That is only for the sick. And you are as sick as the miser who wants to keep everything for himself."

Then *RE*'s inventor had the effrontery to say: "It is not the sick who need the doctor, but the healthy." And they had no more to say to each other.

BUT FT'S INVENTOR was nevertheless a reasonable man who used to consult with his wife. She said that if he could save their mutual childhood friend she would never forget it, but if he left him in the lurch she would always remember. So he went to the Public Prosecutor and said that the inventor of *RE* was a talented man who had merely been overworking for a long time. One ought to forget what he had said and make use of his talents in the services of the community, for a scientist lives not only in his laboratory but also in the community, even if he did not have a wife and child. In the High Court, the Public Prosecutor declared that he had no grounds for accusation; *RE* and *FT* could not be regarded merely as conventional medicaments, they should also be regarded as means for political power, and should therefore be administered publicly (with scientific assistance, naturally). The inventor of *FT* had offered such assistance, and if the inventor of *RE* would do the same, the law would make no distinctions between them. It would offer them both permanent public appointments and supply them with all available means with which to further their respective and highly respectable inventions. They would, however, become of even greater benefit to the community if they did not immediately make people forget or remember *everything*, but only make people forget or remember *some things*.

The accused looked suspiciously at his colleague, who sat in the public seats in company with his wife, nodding vigorously at him. He accepted the favourable judgment. The two former friends were obliged to come together in respect of their common

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task, which had gone very badly to begin with. Later on it went so well that they began to use each other as guinea-pigs. By mutual assent they forgot all their old disagreements and remembered what they had in common. They co-operated more and more extensively, finally co-operating in the invention of preparation *REFT*, which combined the most excellent properties of both of the now obsolete individual inventions. The new stuff was demonstrated for the first time before a specially invited gathering in the law-courts. A hardened criminal, who had sat in prison for so many years that he had forgotten everything about his crime insisted in the court where each hearing took place that he had been tortured beforehand. He had no sooner swallowed *REFT* than he straight away confessed, denying that he had ever been the object of torture.

The two inventors were hailed by the best people, in a land which was going forward to meet a happy future. In the public gallery sat the wife of one of them. But they did not appear to know her.

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Nirad C. Chaudhuri

On Understanding the Hindus

THE HINDUS are now the largest, and also the dominant element in the population of India. They are the masters and rulers. They have regained political power after many centuries, and are fully aware of it, perhaps overaware. They are also the only source of energy for the country considered as a human machine; and it is their desires and aspirations which are keeping it running. No other element counts. As the current jargon describes all the non-Hindus, they are only *minorities*.

The dominant and also dominating position of the Hindus is so patent that one would have thought that it would create interest in them both as individuals and as a collective personality. It has been said that character is fate. Now, if this is true of individuals, it seems to be no less true for nations. There certainly is such a thing as a subsequent evolution of a people. At least, I have no hesitation in saying that if the history of India has taken a certain course in the last fifty years, or for that matter in the last thousand, that is due, above all, to the Hindu character. It has been the most decisive determining influence on the historical process. I feel equally certain that it will remain so and shape the form of everything that is being undertaken for and in the country.

But I hardly notice the interest which the Hindu character deserves, though I see a good deal in reinforced concrete. The contemporary craze for information about material and external things is not associated in India today with even a balancing interest in the mind and behaviour of the Hindus, though they are a very specialised type of human being, who cannot be managed at all by imputing Western mental traits to them.

At the most, one finds an American, British, or European scholar trying to interpret them in the light of a prefabricated psychology. But Freudian or Freudistic interpretations of the Hindu mind are no better guides to it than any other indoctrinated approach, for example the Marxist. All these are intellectual games with the Hindus as chessmen, and very interesting they are as games. But the living Hindu belongs to his own world, which is not less bizarre than the Freudian, nor is it less dogmatic and fanatical than the Marxist.

MUCH MORE PUZZLING than the contemporary indifference in respect of the Hindu mind is a past failure. Incredible as it might sound, the British, though they ruled India for two hundred years and at first with great success, never succeeded even in discovering the Hindu mind, not to speak of getting to grips with it. This failure stands in astounding contrast with their knowledge in the non-human sphere, and even in the human when it was a question of a kind of fauna only, and not of a fellow-mind. Since I have spoken with undisguised admiration of that knowledge I think I have earned the right to criticise the failure. The British intelligence stopped short at treating human beings in India as animals, and splintered on the mind. It burst above Hindu behaviour like shrapnel on entrenched positions, only irritating the defenders, but giving no help to the attacking side.

NO ONE POINTED this out more forcefully than a Bengali, and he did so when the British were at the height of their power and prestige in India. He was Bankim Chandra Chatterji, who besides being a genius in imaginative literature, was certainly the most powerful intellect produced by India in the nineteenth century, and one of the greatest

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of Hindu minds, perhaps equalled in the past —the whole of the Hindu past—only by the great Samkara. In one of his books, published in the 'eighties of the last century, he made a character—whom he represented as a teacher—say that "the English had a limited intelligence and their knowledge was irritating." The student in the dialogue at once remarked, showing the Bengali's awe of the English mind in those days, that in an insignificant and petty Bengali this was very cheeky. The teacher stuck to his point and amplified it. I give a translation of the passage:

> Yes, even as an insignificant Bengali I will say that the English intellect is narrow. A nation which has been ruling India for one hundred and twenty years and has not understood one thing about its inhabitants, may have many other qualities—I am willing to admit that—but it cannot be credited with a comprehensive intelligence.

Then Chatterji summed up the Englishman's knowledge of India in a vivid and most illuminating simile. He compared it to a large and fine orchard, full of fruit which was neither eaten nor enjoyed by its owner. I do not think that the purely external character of the British knowledge of India could be illustrated more effectively.

This failure, so inexplicable at first sight, is, however, very easily accounted for. As soon as the English mind came in contact with the Hindu's, which was a very different kind of mind, it completely lost its temper, and so became incapable of dispassionate analysis. But the display of temper was at least spectacular, like fireworks. The pens of the administrators, teachers, missionaries, in fact, of all Englishmen who had to deal at first hand with the Hindus, spluttered pejoratives in the manner of crackers.

Never did the exhibition of contempt and anger cease so long as British rule remained a live thing in India. "Degraded, perverse, grotesque, contradictory"—were some of the milder adjectives used. The "effeminate Hindu" was a stock phrase. The Hindus were regarded as untruthful, dishonest, and shifty, and often described as such to their faces. So far from softening in their actual company, the Englishman only felt more provoked by it to speak out his mind. Even after inviting a modern Hindu to a meal he would make the shortcomings of his character the staple of his table-talk. The toast to the guest lost nothing in raciness.

AGAIN, NO ONE NOTED this more clearly than Bankim Chandra Chatterji, who drew a very unexpected moral from it. In a remarkable article in Bengali, entitled "Racial Animosity" and published in 1873, he wrote:

> If we take up any English newspaper (that is, a newspaper edited by Englishmen) in India we are sure to find somewhere in it some abuse of the Natives, some unfair vilification. Again, looking into any Bengali newspaper, we find as a matter of equal certainty anger against the English and denunciation of them. In every Indian newspaper there is unjust criticism of the English, in every English newspaper the same injustice to Indians. This has been going on for a long time, there is nothing novel about it. Conversation in society runs along the same lines.

Chatterji then went on to say that good people on both sides regretted this, and were trying to put an end to it so far as they could, but with no success whatever. Then followed his own comment, which was extremely original. He on his part regretted the failure to consider whether Indians had anything to gain at all by having the racial enmity done away with, and whether it was at all removable. He observed that the hatred was the product of the historical situation. Then he concluded:

> So long as the conqueror-conquered relationship will last between the English and Indians, and so long as even in our present degraded condition we shall remember our former national glory, there cannot be any hope of lessening the racial hatred. And I sincerely pray that so long as we do not become the equals of the English, may this impact of racial animosity remain as strong on us as it is now! After all, racial hatred and emulation run side by side, and it is to the existence of the hatred that we owe our efforts to rival the English up to a point. We shall not make the effort to the same extent if we are pampered by them, as we are now doing under insult and ridicule, because there will not be the same smart all over the body. Competition can exist only with opponents, and not with colleagues. A progressive enemy stimulates progress, a progressive friend is an encourager of indolence.

As a contemporary judgment on the mutual misunderstanding this passage is remarkable, and all the more so because we now have an opportunity to compare it with the effect of Western praise—the new flattery. No sensible Indian will have a moment's hesitation in saying which is preferable. One day I shall write a whole book to describe what we in Bengal did by way of replying to the British contumely. Here I shall only say, and I say it as one of the

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very last of the Babus who picked up the gauntlet thrown down by the English, that if I write the kind of English I write, it is due partly at least to the ridicule of our English by the local British, high and low.

BUT I MUST ALSO be fair. It was not the Englishman alone who felt the irritation, the Muslim felt it equally if not even more. From the very beginning of their relations with the Hindus, even those Muslims who wanted to understand them had to start with unpleasant impressions. Alberuni, who lived in the court of Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni, has written one of the most valuable accounts of the customs and beliefs of the Hindus as they were on the eve of the Muslim conquest. His account is completely objective, but even he could not suppress his annoyance, and had some hard things to set down about the Hindu character at the beginning of his account.

He observed that the character of the Hindus made it "particularly difficult to penetrate into the essential nature of any Indian subject." Its peculiarities, he added, were serious obstacles in the way of knowledge, and they were deeply rooted and manifest to all. He was conscious, and he said so in so many words, that to speak in this way might sound like satire. But he found that there was no escape from the Hindu character. He reconciled himself to it as if with a shrug of the shoulders, commenting, "We can only say that folly is an illness against which there is no medicine." Yet he did not allow this annoyance to interfere with the accuracy and truth of his account. How I wish that the American professors who are so busy with us had some of this realism and insight combined. They would be both more patriotic and more philanthropic if they had. But I hear enough among even Americans and also all other foreigners to convince me that they find many traits in the Hindu character very trying, and I do not understand why they do not make a clean breast of it, except once in a while in a blundering book which never gets anywhere near the Hindu reality and is all the more peevish for being made into a forbidden safety-valve.

AS AGAINST THE angry thesis of all Occidentals who had first-hand experience of the Hindus, two counter-theses were put forward by other Europeans, but for the most part on the strength of hearsay, or only academic study. The first of these came from the European Orientalists, who pieced together a picture of India from Sanskrit and other texts, and tried to represent the Hindu order as a coherent system, with a logic of its own. But from the first this interpretation remained a purely literary creation, a self-sufficient presentation with its exclusive data, axioms, postulates, theorems, and corollaries, a sort of Euclidean geometry of India, an abstraction in the literary dimension, with no necessary relation to anything that existed in fact, though I cannot say that it did not at times touch hard ground. By way of illustration I might refer to the picture of a "Buddhist India" which we had to read in our young days, but which was only a piecing together of information found in Pali and other Buddhist texts. In actual fact, no exclusive "Buddhist India" existed at any time in the history of the country.

This interpretation has now become the discipline called Indology in Western universities, and there are imitations of it in Indian universities also. The science has certainly developed since it was propounded, and it is becoming more accurate and full through continued research, which is largely a better exploitation of the texts. But it still remains the literary creation it was, perfectly valid and even formidable on its own assumptions and in its own world, but of no practical significance except when it falls in with a set of current myths about India. Then its conclusions are trotted out as scientific confirmation of political lies, but even then it is always put to use in a misunderstood and even deliberately falsified version.

THE OTHER INTERPRETATION came from the idealists of Europe, who sought the fulfilment of their moral and spiritual aspirations in the far-off, away from a reality where they were always meeting with disappointment. They wanted something illusion-proof, and since Hindu metaphysics knew neither original sin nor evil as an ever-present challenge to moral notions, it was easy to find in it a refuge for the spiritual and moral romanticism of 19th-century Europe. This line of inquiry was also the continuation of a very much older European myth, summed up in the tag—*Ex Oriente lux*. It was the cult of Mithras or Isis in a revised version, and it invested not only Hinduism, but also Rabindranath Tagore, poor man, with a mysticism which neither of the two possessed! The

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Hindu spirituality of which the West spoke was the creation of a Western spiritual necessity, and was not to be found in India either in books or among men. But at the beginning the search was at least sincere. Now it has degenerated almost into charlatanry, and the Orontes is washing itself into the Tiber. There are few characters which are more painfully unattractive than the Hinduising Occidental. The Hindus have detected this weakness, and have not been slow in setting their mountebanks on the West. It enables a number of my countrymen to make a comfortable livelihood; still I do not like the imposition.

BESIDES these two older and established versions of India, there is a third one which is now making its appearance. Like the first, it is a product of academic research and, in harmony with the spirit of the age, it is economic in its scope. It is an extension of the old historical inquiry from the cultural to the economic field.

The general tendency of this line of research is to rehabilitate the peoples of Asia who had been reduced to political subjection by the expansion of Europe, in the economic sphere. This retrospective attempt at justice, which cannot, of course, undo what history has actually accomplished, aims at showing that, compared with the Western nations, the contemporaneous Asiatics were not less developed economically. So far as knowledge is information, these new investigations are likely to be useful, for they will bring to light a whole body of new facts which are so far unknown. But one must be very careful in their interpretation and in drawing any wider conclusions as to the relative development of the Asiatic and European peoples. It must not be forgotten that history has already pronounced its judgment and no retrospective interpretation can be valid which will even imply that what actually happened was an absurdity, or an injustice, or merely a *lusus naturae*. There is such a thing as foreclosure in history as in law.

The point which has to be specially kept in mind in reassessing the economic development of the nations of Asia before the Europeans brought them under their own domination is that similarities in institutions and even in the realised achievements at a particular epoch are no indication whatever of future potentialities, or even of the actual quality of the life lived. The basic difference between the peoples of Asia and of Europe in the 18th century was this: one was at that point of exhaustion at which the staticity of a people begins, while the other was growing and dynamic. In short, it was a difference in their respective vitality. That made, and will always make, a world of difference.

Since the new line of research is sure to continue and develop, two other reservations must be made about it. First, historical research, however objective in its methods, is always conditioned in its interpretations and practical implications by political changes, and the new economic history of Asia is bound to reflect the mood created by the ebb-tide of European imperialism and also by the policy of economic aid to the Asiatic peoples which has been accepted by nearly all Western countries. Secondly, this new scholarly creation is also likely to be an academic one, like the creation of the old Orientalists.

I HAVE ALSO TO take note of a popular revision of attitude. This is also a by-product of the passing away of the European empires, and is inspired by a sort of mea-culpism. It regards the uniformly contemptuous views on Asiatics and more especially on the Hindus on the part of Europeans as an expression of racial and political arrogance; and as the product of pride as well as of prejudice. This simply will not hold water. For, if there was any original bias in Europe in regard to India in the 18th century, it was a favourable bias. The country was regarded as a land of fabulous wealth and splendour, and of barbaric pearls and gold. In the moral and spiritual sphere, it was supposed to be the home of esoteric wisdom. But this idolatry broke down as soon as the European came into direct contact with the country and its people. The higher the horse, the greater the fall, and the Occidental soon passed from sentimental admiration to disillusioned abuse.

Gradually, the British in India built up a comprehensive local tradition in respect of Indians, which was a sort of common law of disparagement based on *ad hoc* judgments. Throughout the 19th century it grew by broadening from precedent to precedent, without providing any redress in equity. Every newcomer from Britain was quickly initiated into it, and lost his sense of fairness with an ease which, to say the least, was remarkable. We Indians noticed the transformation, and it was a subject of frequent comment among us. In my young

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days, if a teacher or missionary was even passably nice, the students at once recognised a newcomer in him (of course helped by the state of his complexion too), and they observed ruefully that he would not be recognisable in a year's time. We always attributed this change to the evil influence of the hard-boiled Anglo-Indian (old sense), and never even imagined that the man's personal experience might have something to do with it.

Two-Way Passage

I THINK Mr. E. M. Forster can be cited as a witness on this question: whether or not first-hand experience was the really decisive factor in bringing about a change of opinion in the Englishman in regard to Indians. In the eyes of the British and Indians alike Mr. Forster is *the* pro-Indian Englishman. He was adored by the Indian toadies who in the olden days longed for English companionship, male and female, and is even now very highly regarded by the ex-toadies who bask in the sunshine of British company in the big cities of India, especially New Delhi. But his novel, *A Passage to India*, presents all the Indians in it either as perverted, clownish, or queer characters. There are few delineations of the Indian character which are more insultingly condescending to self-respecting Indians, Muslim and Hindu, than those of this book. The Muslim who was a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council at the time the book was published was furious over it, and I too, suspecting from the reviews that it would be painful to go through while British rule lasted in India, did not read it till 1954. Then all my fears were confirmed.

But the important thing is that Mr. Forster was not influenced by the local tradition. He was not *persona grata* with the British ruling class in India, and he reciprocated the unfriendliness. If he was badly treated by some of them he did not treat them less unkindly. Yet, when it came to drawing Indian characters, he was as satirical and uncomplimentary as the worst of the others could be. Mr. Forster makes no secret that he did not feel drawn towards the Hindus, and that he preferred the Muslims.

So, THE REVISION OF history as well as the revision of policy leaves the old unfavourable judgment untouched. It stands as a challenge to everyone who would offer an alternative interpretation of the Asiatic and more especially the Hindu character. The angry reaction was universal, and there was no European who came to India who did not leave the country with a poorer opinion of its inhabitants than he had come with, and many recorded it. This massive, spontaneous, and uniform criticism by live minds which were formed by a culture at the height of its power cannot be cancelled by afterthoughts which have their source in the *Untergang des Abendlandes*.

I accept the empiric, albeit slapdash, judgments as sincere, as opinions founded on actual experience of something or other though not as final assessments, and I believe they should be the starting-point for any intellectual appraisement. No new interpreter will reach dependable conclusions about the Hindus by treating these old judgments as dishonest. It is only by admitting their *bona fides* that one can get past the denigration.

My criticism of the former Western attitude is this: that it did not go forward from anger to understanding; and my criticism of the Hindu revisionists is also on the same lines—that they get angry without understanding the Western reaction. I do not get angry any more, though I used to, and I think, by accepting the Western anger as genuine, I have put the interpretations of Hindu life that I am going to offer on a sound footing.

INTELLECTUALLY, the European mind was outraged by the Hindus precisely in those three principles which were fundamental to its approach to life, and which it had been applying with ever greater strictness since the Renaissance: that of reason, that of order, and that of measure. Those who were calling even the beautiful medieval civilisation Gothic barbarism in the light of the new European values were not likely in any circumstances to be complimentary or even understanding with the Hindus. To these men everything about these people appeared to be irrational, inconsistent, unholy, and extravagant; also lush, awry, and hypertrophied beyond conception.

The contradictions were formidable. There was an extreme of renunciation with its opposite in an avarice of whose sordidness no European could form any idea. There was an unnatural insistence, partly realised in practice, on chastity, accompanied by a sex-obsession and sensuality in personal life whose scale and degradation had to be seen to be believed. To give another example, there was a morbid respect for animal

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life, going hand in hand with beastly cruelty to living creatures subject to human exploitation. Well, one could go on listing such things indefinitely.

The irrationality was equally perplexing. In political thought the so-called Kautilya, now called Kautalya, in his *Arthasastra* gives expression to the frankest conceivable *raison d'état*. The book should be a *vade mecum* for all who want to run a secular and police state, but its last chapter seriously lists the methods and drugs by using which spies can become invisible! The *Manu Smitri*, the famous "Laws of Manu," the most authoritative of the treatises on Hindu sacred law, is as a whole a very noble exposition of the Brahmanic way of life, but its final chapter describes seriously what kind of re-birth is punishment for which sin. It actually says that if a man steals silk he becomes a partridge, but by stealing dyed cloth he becomes not any kind of partridge but only a francolin partridge (black partridge). Some other threatened metempsychoses are—for stealing cotton-cloth a man becomes a crane, but by stealing linen he becomes a frog. Please read the whole chapter in an English translation, *e.g.*, Buehler's.

All this was noticed by Alberuni, and it did not make him more respectful of the Hindu mind. Comparing the Hindus with the Greeks, he said that the former had no one to bring the sciences to a classical perfection. Therefore, he went on to say, the scientific theories of the Hindus were in a state of utter confusion, devoid of order, and in the last resort always mixed up with the silly notions of the crowd. Alberuni compared their mathematics and astronomy to a mixture of pearls and sour dates or dung, and observed that both kinds of things were equal in their eyes because they could not raise themselves to the methods of a strictly scientific education.

I MYSELF HAVE all my life seen professors of physics loaded with amulets, secularists poring over horoscopes and palms, and politicians refraining from submitting their election nominations except on auspicious days. As I am writing these lines, preparations are going on in the park before my house for a great *Yajna* or Brahmanic sacrifice to avert the destruction of the world at the beginning of February. This has been predicted by the astrologers and is to be brought about by a conjunction of eight planets. I am sure that, simultaneously, the secular Hindus of New Delhi (who are not above coming to these sacrifices) are whispering into American ears that Hinduism is dying of Americanism, and getting promises of more money to hasten the process.

The Shock of Contradictions

THE WESTERN sense of measure, if anything, was even more outraged. Neither time nor space had any limits for the Hindus. Alberuni noted this as well. Thousands and even millions were nothing to them, and if they only could they would have put ∞ after every mention of space, and nth after every enumeration of magnitude. Even now the Hindus get angry if the usual historical chronology in terms of Christ's birth is applied to their existence. They say that it is too petty a scale to apply to anything Hindu: their duration must be measured in aeons. In the same way the number of their gods became swollen from some thirty-three of the earliest times to three hundred and thirty million in later times. It is inherent in the Nature of Things in India that such magnifications should take place. To the Hindu world might be applied the words of the old Dutch navigator quoted by Poe: "Surely, there is a sea where the ship itself will grow in bulk like the living body of the seaman." Varying the simile one might say that the Hindu mind is so convex that it is in itself a microscope.

In the moral sphere, the Europeans were shocked by contradictions, which seemed wholly unnatural to them, which they could not reconcile with any principle of morality familiar to them. These contradictions were particularly resented by the Western mind when the Hindus mixed up sexual experiences with the spiritual. They attributed such things to a devilish hypocrisy or utter degradation, and I must say that I have myself been shocked by their capacity for sophistry. When I was young, a neo-Hindu Sadhu came to preach in my town. He spoke of Krishna, and referring to the accusation brought forward by the Christian missionaries that he was licentious, the champion of Hinduism said something in Hindi whose equivalent I give in English: "That showed that Krishna was a mighty hero. If you had to carry on with sixteen hundred lusty young women like Krishna, in one night your face would look like a baked apple." The roar of laughter and the approving murmur that followed showed that the Hindu crowd was satisfied that the

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blasphemous missionaries had been answered in the way they deserved.

The Hindus, on their part, cannot understand the European impatience and criticism. They get angry and attribute them to racial arrogance. Now, I accept the Hindu position as I do the European, and therefore I can make allowance for both. But if I am able to do so, that detachment has been arrived at by taking great pains to understand both attitudes, and to discover their springs.

THE POINT WHICH MUST be thoroughly grasped before anyone can attempt to deal with Hindu behaviour is that in one's contacts with it one is in very much deeper waters than is generally suspected. Having obtained a sounding of the depths I am no longer offended by the contempt which European rationalism airs towards us, nor am I taken in by the tricks of the expositors of Hindu spirituality. Thus, in offering my interpretations, I have no need to be in awe of either of the attitudes, and, least of all, of European disapproval. For an angry and vociferous but honest defence of the Hindu behaviour, readers should go to the traditional Hindu, and for sheepish, mumbled, and dishonest apologies to the Anglicised Hindu. I belong to neither school.

The English in India

THE SOLUTION of even the most complex of problems is often a matter of finding the right clues, be they ever so faint at the start. As it happens, there is at least one ready-to-hand for understanding the Hindus, and I wonder why it has never been followed, nor to my knowledge even thought of. This is the conduct and behaviour of the English when they were ruling India. In my book on England I described the effect of the Indian climate and weather on the English character, and I hope I shall be permitted to quote the passage. After going to England and feeling the effect of the English weather on myself I became aware of what its converse could be.

> After experiencing the English weather I had no difficulty in understanding why Englishmen became so offensive in India, losing their usual kindliness and equability in human relations. Their sense of proportion broke down, the habit of understatement disappeared, and they became extremists with an incredible stringency in their opinions, which became raw and crude. In many cases they degenerated into outright cads, and the more sensitive or specialised the English organism, the more warped it became.

The only way to avert this unconscious transformation was to bring about a deliberate one —first and foremost, in the direction of absolute simplicity. No one saw this more clearly and with greater intuitive insight than Kipling. He admonished his countrymen in India to give up trying to remain as complex and nuanced as they were born and taught to be, and to become instead clean wolves:

> *Wash daily from nose-tip to tail-tip; drink deeply, but never too deep;*
> *And remember the night is for hunting, and forget not the day is for sleep.*[1]

Kipling could write with extreme subtlety of English life, but that manner he reserved for the home product, adopting a stark style for India, obeying his own insight. *Wind in the Willows* is the fable of the Englishman at home, and *The Jungle Book* that of the Englishman in India. The British military authorities out here, who were the most perfect intuitive empiricists seen in history, realised the need for simplification, and they were not mealy-mouthed in their advocacy of it. The following is from a book of instructions compiled by the General Staff in India for British soldiers:

> There are three kinds of Venereal Disease. They are contracted by sexual intercourse with diseased women; nearly every Indian wayside prostitute suffers from one or more of these diseases. The chief means of prevention are—(1) Avoid sexual intercourse; (2) immediate washing of the penis with soap and water after sexual intercourse; (3) use the Prophylactic Treatment Room within one hour; (4) report sick *at once* if you think you are infected.

The British soldier back home might well say:

> *Tho' I walks with fifty 'ousemaids outer Chelsea to the Strand,*
> *An' they talks a lot o' lovin', but wot do they understand?*

Any attempt at carrying over the sophistication of life at home to India led, in any case, to failure and degeneration, and at times to calamity and even death. The dainty Rose Aylmer, who possessed not only beauty but

[1] The duty of sleeping in India is neglected in these days not only by the British but by all Occidentals, and the result is a perceptible softening of the brain. This would have been harmful if they had to govern the country instead of only flattering us and distributing doles.

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every virtue and every grace which even the most fastidious Englishman could expect in a woman, died in Calcutta of eating too much pineapple. When the Englishman drank in India he drank in hogsheads. Even one of the most delightful frills of English life, flirtation, became dangerous here. The P. & O. boat was a terrible trap, and what was a mere bagatelle or *menu plaisir* on its decks appeared as the pursuit of a spectral fury in a phantom rickshaw at Simla. The flirting English were an object of ridicule and contempt even to the monkeys of Jakko. As one of these put the matter:

I follow no man's carriage, and no, never in my life
Have I flirted at Peliti's with another Bandar's wife.

The only means of rescuing love from its little emptinesses and worse in the hill-stations was to yoke it to duty on the plains, and give it a formidable neutrality with complete inwardness, as is seen in Kipling's story of *William the Conqueror*. No wonder Mr. Somerset Maugham did not relish that sort of treatment of love. English life in India, if it was to be kept sane and wholesome, had to run, like a train, on rails, and the two rails were patriotism and duty. To allow anybody to slip off that rigid track was to invite disaster as much in public as in private life.

I OFTEN ASKED myself in the olden days why the Indian servants of the British households held such a low opinion of their masters and mistresses. With them it was not simply another case of no man being a hero to his valet. They saw too much. They saw things which outraged their sense of morals and manners, and neither the Sahib nor the Mem Sahib thought enough of them as human beings to put any restraint on themselves or affect any disguise. They gave a blatant exhibition of what the servants looked upon as thoroughly *bé-sharam*, shameless goings-on.

Behind the looseness stood perversion. Quite a number of Englishmen in India became perverts in sexual life, besides being obsessed with it. I know at first hand that in the late twenties the street before a certain bookshop in Calcutta used to be crowded by the cars of the Sahibs who came there on the English mail day to buy the latest arrivals in the way of erotic books. The trade in such literature and in pornographic pictures was very large and profitable in Calcutta.

The deterioration in collective behaviour was, if anything, worse. The tensions in personal life were bound to spill out into the wider sphere, but even when the private life of the British in India was correct and respectable, their behaviour to the people of the country hardly improved. Perhaps that was the safety-valve through which the strain of living in India found an outlet, and therefore relief. It is strange that while dealing out justice between Indian and Indian they were outstandingly successful, especially before the nationalist movement queered the pitch of impartiality, in regard to relations between themselves and us the British in India lost all sense of right and wrong, truth and falsehood, charity and malice, and paraded a racial arrogance whose mildest form was a stony silence or in the case of unavoidable meetings an abrupt, businesslike termination without even any wishing back to an Indian's wish, and the worst was an obstreperous violence.

THE SQUALID STORY is far too well known for me to have to repeat it. Gradually, it became the fundamental assumption of Indo-British personal relations that the less there was of it the better for both the sides, in favour of which at least this was to be said: that it was inspired by common sense. In the political and public relationship, the unwritten law was that there was to be no admission of mistakes, and no amends in the nature of an apology. The principle behind that was simple. The British in India argued that, given the disparity in numbers between the rulers and the ruled, the only safeguard for the former was the Indian's belief in their inherent superiority. Therefore nothing was to be done which could create an impression of weakness or fallibility, and undermine the belief. So it became a proverb among us Indians that under British rule the *Hakim* (magistrate, giver of the order) could be changed, but never the *hukm* (the order).

In these circumstances even one of the greatest virtues of the British people, their sense of discipline with its accompaniment of team spirit, often showed itself as a vice. Kipling extolled discipline:

... the strength of the Pack is the Wolf
and the strength of the Wolf is the Pack....

Now these are the laws of the Jungle,
and many and mighty are they;
But the head and the hoof of the Law and the
haunch and the hump is—Obey.

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He gave the example of the Hindus to emphasise the moral:

The 'eathen in 'is blindness bows down to wood an' stone;
'E don't obey no orders unless they is 'is own;
'E keeps 'is side-arms awful: 'e leaves 'em all about,
An' then up comes the Regiment an' pokes the 'eathen out.

So far so good. But in its application to Indo-British relations the discipline and team spirit boiled down to the brutal proposition that over every question at issue between the two peoples, the whole of the British community in India was to make common cause against the whole of the Indian community, without reference to the merits of any case. There never was to be any telling on or letting down of a countryman, whoever he might be or whatever he might have done. Even a murderer was to be shielded. Anyone who did not follow that code was a traitor. So there was nothing unexpected in the fact that an imperious Viceroy like Lord Curzon had to swallow insults when he departed from this tradition in the interest of justice. He had punished a British cavalry regiment by transfer to a distant station for not disclosing who among its troopers had murdered a poor rickshaw-puller at Simla. But when some time later the regiment rode past in a parade at Delhi the whole of the British community of men and women present there rose in a body and cheered the regiment frantically, while Curzon sat frozen in contempt and anger.

Kipling to Forster

ON THE WHOLE PERIMETER of Indo-British relations this façade of cool and deliberate racial arrogance presented itself. But though it never showed any crack outwardly, there was a hollow spot in it which rumbled ominously from time to time. The obverse of British haughtiness had a reverse, and on it there was the figure of something like abject and irrational poltroonry. The life of the British community in India was haunted by a great fear, which never left their imagination. It was the fear of a sudden uprising of the disarmed masses of the country, followed by massacre. This fear was at its highest when British power, too, was absolutely unchallenged and unchallengeable, that is to say, in the last quarter of the 19th century. It was the product of the Mutiny, which left an acute anxiety-neurosis as a permanent legacy to the British in India.

Kipling, who gave to every English experience in India its best expression in literature, could not be expected to overlook such a theme. So he made a fable out of the Mutiny in the story *Red Dog*. In it revenge, even to the last ditch, becomes a sacred duty. A wolf who did not belong to any pack one evening threw himself at Mowgli's feet and was seen to be in a horribly mangled condition. When asked who had done this he replied:

> The dhole, the dhole of the Dekkan—Red Dog, the Killer! They came north from the south saying that the Dekkan was empty and killing out by the way. When this moon was new there were four to me—my mate and three cubs. She would teach them to kill on the grass plains, hiding to drive the buck, as we do who are of the open. At midnight I heard them together, full tongue on the trail. At the dawn-wind I found them stiff in the grass—four, Free People, four when this moon was new. Then I sought my Blood-Right, and found the dhole.

It was thus that they brought the news of Kabul or Cawnpore. When asked how many wild dogs there were, the wounded wolf replied:

> I do not know. Three of them will kill no more, but at the last they drove me like the buck; on my three legs they drove me. Look, Free People!

When he was given some food, he said humbly:

> This shall be no loss. Give me a little strength, Free People, and I also will kill. My lair is empty that was full when this moon was new, and the Blood Debt is not all paid.

This explains the terrible revenge taken by Colonel Neill after the recovery of Cawnpore. And this is how the story ends:

> But of all the Pack of two hundred fighting dholes, whose boast was that all Jungles were their Jungle, and that no living thing could stand before them, not one returned to the Dekkan to carry that word.

This ending, strong as it is, was however no improvement on the conclusion by Lord Roberts of his account of the battle at Lucknow: "Eventually all the rebels were killed, save three or four who dropped over the wall on the city side. It is to be hoped they lived to tell the tale of the dauntless courage which carried everything before it." British courage, of course!

IT MUST BE conceded that as Kipling saw it the killing rose to the level of grandeur, as a poetically conceived but practically carried out demonstration of the national motto: *Honi soit qui mal y pense*. But when neither the danger nor the readiness to be killed in claiming the blood-right existed the fear became not only

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absurd, but also cowardly. There is no doubt that the entire British community in India remained possessed by this craven fear till the very end of their rule.

I have now sufficiently outgrown my earlier nationalistic susceptibilities to be able to see where the fear came from. In the light of their own tradition of freedom, the British always had a bad conscience about their rule in India, and seeing the numerical disproportion between themselves and their subjects they naturally imputed as much eagerness to revolt to them as they themselves would have felt in similar circumstances.

However that may be, the fear did infinite harm to Indo-British relations even in normal and very tame conditions. In the military sphere the fear created an obsession with internal security which interfered with the dispositions of the Indian army for its proper military role. For example, during the First World War the Mesopotamian front wanted troops badly. But the Government of India was so nervous about the internal situation that it would not despatch adequate reinforcement; instead it kept fairly large bodies of troops tied down to India. Disaster followed, and the Mesopotamia Commission which inquired into it thought the fear about the internal situation unjustified.

In the years immediately following that war the Army authorities in India partly exorcised themselves of the internal incubus, but even so they allotted about twenty-seven of the forty-four battalions of British infantry stationed in India to internal security duties. Furthermore, even medium artillery was assigned to this task, and the batteries consisted of 60-pounder guns and 6-inch howitzers!

Over the life of the British community in India, even in peace time, the fear was always a sky of threatening clouds, and so nearly the whole of the British civilian population of arms-bearing age was given military training in volunteer units. In times of trouble the fear rose to the pitch of panic, and created a terrible retaliatory violence. That was why General Dyer thought it necessary when he heard of the murder of some of his countrymen and of the brutal assault on a countrywoman at Amritsar, that he must shoot not only to suppress the riot, but to create deterrent terror. That was also why, after the merciless shooting at Jallianwallah Bagh, a British subaltern declared with exultant joy how much he had enjoyed seeing a seething mass of sweating niggers being shot down.

In 1930 I saw another outburst of fear and ferocity after some terroristic outrages by the Bengali revolutionaries. The British community in Calcutta and the districts of Bengal went into an unbelievable hysteria. The Anglican clergymen, who were supported in India by the military budget, justified their share in military expenditure by being some of the fiercest heroes in words. One of them never slept without a revolver under his pillow. In Calcutta British editors would not see a Bengali without keeping their hands on the butt of the pistol in the right-hand drawer, and without two Gurkha guards sandwiching the visitor on two sides. English women went about in terror lest they might be infected with the germs of venereal disease in the tramcars, in which suspicious-looking handkerchiefs were seen to have been left on the seats.

This fear, together with the unreasonable anxiety to be protected and molly-coddled, was transferred to the external sphere in an even more absurd form during the Second World War. After the Japanese attack on Malaya, the British in Calcutta squealed as we never thought such fire-breathing heroes could, even if they were tradesmen. They wanted fighter squadrons to be sent out even from Britain, because they thought there was nothing more urgent than the protection of their skins, the skins of men who had done everything in their power to ruin and destroy the British Empire in India by their lack of intelligence, arrogance, and intransigence. When one of these creatures criticised Lord Beaverbrook for curtly refusing to divert fighter planes from Britain to India I cannot say how disgusted even I as an Indian felt.

Such was the effect of the sojourn in a tropical country and among a potentially hostile indigenous population on the morale of a brave and kindly people. Even the best type of Englishman could not escape being denatured to a greater or lesser degree by his stay in the country. In the cultural sphere a comparable aberration made its appearance. It was a morbid disinclination to share their higher culture with their subjects. No empire has ever been successful without a spirit of proselytisation in culture. The Romans realised this in the past as the Russians do to-day. But the English in India showed a marked disinclination for it. There was hardly one Englishman in India who

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liked, or even as a matter of policy thought it desirable, that we should write English or absorb Western culture. They had a feeling that by being imitated by us their traditions would be polluted, and even so generous an Englishman as Bethune advised a Bengali who had written in English to go over tc Bengali. Of course, this led to the creation of modern Bengali poetry, but it was no service to the British Empire in India.

This implicit and sometimes explicit condemnation of cultural miscegenation reminds me of a story in the Ramayana. One day it was reported to Rama that the son of a Brahmin had died suddenly. For this untoward event they could only think of one reason—that some impious act had been committed somewhere. Rama went out to investigate, and found that a Sudra named Sambuka was performing religious duties reserved only for the twice-born Aryan. His head was immediately cut off, and upon that the son of the Brahmin came to life again. The gods showered praise and flowers on Rama for protecting Aryan culture in this decisive manner.

This is how the story is told in the Ramayana. By the time the later poet Bhavabhuti wrote about the episode in the 8th century, the original sang-froid of the Aryan in discharging such duties to his community had weakened so far as to permit the intrusion of a note of compassion. So, in the play, *Uttara-Rāma-Charita*, we find that Bhavabhuti has made Rama half-regretful of the cruel duty. So he braces himself up to it by saying that a king who had banished his innocent wife to please his subjects had no right to indulge in pity. On the other hand, the Sudra was made to say that there could be no better fulfilment of his devotions than the fact that Rama had come to kill him. So the Sudra went straight to heaven by being killed by an Aryan and sacrificing his life for the Aryan community.

I know that a respectably large number of Englishmen in India would have liked to send us to heaven in this manner for our devotion to the English language and literature, and not a smaller number would have thought that for every Bengali Babu who spoke English an English child was likely, not perhaps to die, but in any case to be born black.

BUT THE MOST UNEXPECTED, and yet when one thinks of the matter the most natural, change came over one of the greatest qualities of the Englishman—his compassion for weak creatures, which was a complement of his tough inmost fibre. We in the past used to complain that in their behaviour towards the people of the country the British in India showed an intolerable hardness. Certainly, this was not true of them as a class. They never forgot the claim of compassion, but they gave it a very special form, by tropicalising it, so to speak. One type of compassion was voiced by Mr. E. M. Forster in *A Passage to India*. The moral stand of the book boils down to this: that however impossible and even provoking an Indian might be, an Englishman has no right to forget that he is a Christian gentleman. His plea for Indo-British friendship always reminds me of the poem by T. Gisborne:

> *Turn, turn thy hasty foot aside,*
> *Nor crush that helpless worm!*
> *The frame thy wayward looks deride*
> *Required a God to form.*

I came across another example of British compassion in India when I was young. So far as I remember, it was contained in a book of advice and instructions to British motorists by the Automobile Club of Bengal (a British organisation in those days). Everybody knows how maddening is the behaviour of Indian pedestrians in the face of power-driven vehicles. But for that reason it was not for an Englishman to knock down these men and women. He was asked only to slow up, touch the inadequately clad behind of the offending Indian with his hot radiator, and then the nimble fellow was bound to jump out of the way, and save the Englishman from the sin of homicide.

My third illustration of British compassion in India I give *in extenso* from the manual of instructions compiled in 1930 by the General Staff in India and issued by the Government of India. Here is the passage:

> If this pamphlet had been written for angels, it would not be necessary to say anything about the results of assaulting Indians. Unfortunately, however, we are all very human and so we must produce a selfish argument, which will perhaps deter some when all others fail. It is seldom indeed that an Indian is beaten without some unpleasant result for the beater. Sometimes the damage can be repaired by the application of more or less *"baksheesh"*; at others, admonishment or a few days C.B. may be the worst result. But you are lucky if you get off so easily, for one never knows how these cases may end. Quite a slight blow or kick, even a push, none of which would do any permanent damage to a healthy Englishman, will often cause serious harm to an Indian. Many of them suffer from enlarged spleens and other diseases, and any violence,

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however slight, is likely to set up serious internal troubles which sometimes even end in death. Remember that if once the case gets into the law-courts, there will probably be a lot of false evidence and exaggeration from witnesses on the other side, and it will almost certainly go hard with you. Though you may have only meant to administer a mild hiding, there can be no doubt that you are responsible for the damage done and you will have to suffer in consequence.

Looking at matters in another way, to beat a man who has neither the strength nor, in most cases, the pluck to stand up to you, is not an achievement to be proud of; it savours of bullying. So, for every reason, keep your hands—and boots—off the Indian.

This extract, I would say, shows former Indo-British relations at their most good-humoured. Many people might consider the whole plea maddening, but the most maddening thing in it is not the apparent heartlessness of the advice, but the literal truth of the statements of fact. The provocation was real and continuous. For instance, no one can dispute the truth of the following statement of facts when the same manual[2] gives instructions to British soldiers about dealing with their Indian servants:

When detected in some dishonest act, he will endeavour to escape the consequences by working on the passions of his accusers. He knows well that it is a serious offence for a soldier to assault a native and tries by a display of insolence and abuse to aggravate the man who has found him out into striking him. He reasons that his own fault will be lost sight of when the greater offence of the soldier is dealt with. In many cases he is right.

I would conclude this argument by saying that the whole situation was so absurd, and every incident seemed to take place in such an odd world of distorting looking-glasses, that one could not even recommend decency without a cynical shrug of the shoulders.

Aryan & Anglo-Saxon

IN THEIR DAY the British tried to get relief from this unending strain in various ways. At first they went as far as they could towards adapting themselves to the climate and to the usages of the country, even to the point of going native. But that resulted in a fantastic extravagance and hypertrophy of the English character. The Englishman in India ran wild, so to say. Therefore, when the introduction of steam travel made it possible they tried another method. The British authorities gave their countrymen long leave to go and recuperate at home. This refreshment kept the British qualities in better shape but worsened the relations with the people of India. In the epoch of furloughs the Englishman in India became less capable of mixing with Indians, grew more intolerant of their ways, and sought refuge in segregation, or in a cold formality of intercourse.

I hope it will not be thought that I am raking up an old scandal for its own sake. I do think that it will bear repetition for the moral it contains in regard to race relations in general, a moral which should be taken to heart by all nations which in one way or another have to exercise overlordship, and are doing so already. My object is only to drive home the point I made at the outset—that a key to the Hindu character is to be found in the conduct of the British in India. Certain analogies must already have occurred to the reader, among which I would emphasise the following: race pride and sense of superiority; segregation of the conflicting elements; aggressive self-defence; suppression and unconscious ill-treatment of the indigenous population; unwillingness to share culture; and continual mental strain.

The situation in which the British found themselves was the product in the main of the following circumstances: the advent of a people of temperate lands in a tropical country; its unfamiliar and uncongenial climate and weather; the presence of an overwhelming number of natives unreconciled to foreign rule; an ever-present threat of submergence in a lower culture. No calm reasoning could soften the harshness of these contacts. The impatience, the arrogance, the bad temper, the degeneration, in fact, all the unpleasantness was inherent in the situation.

The position of the Aryan, who afterwards became Hindu, was identical. I must particularly stress the first circumstance to which I have referred above. Had the Aryan not been originally a man from a temperate land, mere existence in India could not have made him what he became. The aboriginals have lived in the country for a longer time, but they do not exhibit the characteristic Hindu traits. For these to develop, the type of man had had to be formed by a wholly different environment to begin with. The Aryans were.

Yet the similarity of the situation is the least

[2] The military officer who was in charge of this book was the Senior General Staff Officer, M.O. 3, Army Headquarters, Simla.

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part of the matter. The more important fact is its prolongation to three thousand years for the Hindus, compared with only two hundred for the British. Multiply the experiences of the latter by fifteen, and you get the Hindu, but still with much less than fifteen times the nastiness. For this at least the Hindu deserves credit. To put the matter briefly, the Hindu is the European distorted, corrupted, and made degenerate by the cruel torrid environment and by the hostility, both real and imagined, of the true sons of the soil.

If this is accepted and allowed for, there will be, on the part of Westerners, very little bad-tempered comment on the Hindu character; and on the part of the Hindus, not overmuch anger at British arrogance. It is not for any of the sides to cast the first stone at the other. Both are the victims of Circe, with this difference alone: that one is more of a sufferer than the other. There should be mutual tolerance based on the conviction of a shared degeneration.

I DO THINK that the awareness of equal corruption will be a better emotional basis for the so-called multi-racial Commonwealth, of which much is made, than its professed principle—the pursuit of common aims in world politics, aims which are so rarefied that a large volume of artificial political oxygen is needed to keep that body-politic breathing. After all, it cannot be denied that even the United States and the Soviet Union are pursuing common aims in world affairs, such as peace, disarmament, democracy, technological progress, as well as freedom as understood by each. But that is not preventing them from doing things which might lead to the destruction or near destruction of mankind. Thus, common aims would seem to be very undependable as guarantees for goodwill and co-operation among nations. On the contrary, a frank admission of being equal sinners would at least encourage charity and discourage moral arrogance. That would be a better foundation for international and multi-racial co-operation.

Circe's Triumph

"THEY STOOD at the gate of the goddess with flowing tresses, and heard her, Circe, sweetly singing before her loom, as she walked to and fro weaving an imperishable web, gorgeous and dazzling, such as only goddesses can make. . . ."

So she lived on the island of Aeaea, and so she has in India. Men have stood at her gate, and called to be admitted, and to all she has opened her shining doors. She has taken them in, given them seats, and served food. But with the food she has also mixed the drug which makes them forget their country. Then she has turned them into brute beasts.

No invader who has come into her great continent has been able to resist her spell, and the British who broke it untimely and went home without first hearing the spirits of their dead heroes are still longing after her with the docility of cattle. The Americans are now crying out like Polites, "Friends, there is somebody within singing sweetly, and the hall is echoing to her song. Come quickly, and cry aloud to her."

I am the son of her ancient victims, and I have also had to be a victim myself. Those who have read my autobiography will recall that, so far as it is a personal story, it ends in despair, a very strange state of mind to be in for a young man of about twenty-two. "It was," I wrote in the book, "neither absinthe, nor lust, nor disease, nor remorse for some hideous suppressed crime, nor unrequited love which had brought me to this pass. My low spirits were absolute."

I did not understand then what it was that was making me suffer, and I had not fully arrived at the truth even when I wrote those lines at the age of fifty. Now, of course, I see that Circe had cast her spell on me quite early and done her worst by the time I was twenty. I am grateful to her for that, because by so doing she gave me the time to fight back. Had the spell been cast later, it would have led me, not even to suffering and despair which after all can give a man the desperation to save himself, but to stolidity which sees no meaning in a struggle.

I have indeed saved myself, though Hermes never gave me the drug moly. I had to fight alone for long years, and till about the last lap only defeat faced me, with everybody saying that the labour and the wounds were vain, and the enemy was neither fainting nor failing. Yet the memory of some past which I could not bring up to the surface of consciousness lurked within me and kept me struggling, until I remembered one day who and what I was. The notion that we Hindus were Europeans enslaved by a tropical country became a conviction when I paid a short visit of eight weeks to the West in 1955 at the age of fifty-seven.

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SINCE THEN I have been preaching the idea day in, day out, *urbi et orbi*. To everybody who discusses the ills of India I say that there is no future for us Hindus unless we can recover at least our old European spirit, even if not the European body and pride of flesh. I apply this idea to the most matter-of-fact political and economic tasks facing us in India. For instance, when after my short visit to the West I was asked to speak before the Delhi School of Economics—you can guess the ancestry of the institution from the name alone—I told my audience that they could not hope to carry out the industrial revolution they had so much at heart except under three conditions:

1. Fully, under a re-imposed foreign domination, accompanied by a loss of political as well as economic freedom.

2. Partially, inefficiently, and very uneconomically, by continuing the present unnatural régime of Anglicised Hindus, which I call Brown Colonialism, and remaining dependent on continued foreign training, money, supervision, and spoon-feeding.

3. Fully, naturally, and freely, by recovering our original European spirit and character, and conquering so far as we can the Indian environment.

I do not think that I have to declare in so many words what I stand for. For me there is only one course, and that the most difficult.

IF I WERE to speak from the head alone I would say that there is no chance whatever for what I advocate. It will never be realised, nor even accepted as a programme. But man does not live by the head alone. He has a heart, and for the greater part of my life I have been witness to the suffering which foreign rule can create even when it confers good on the subject people. Knowing this I cannot contemplate another cycle of subjection for my people, though watching the doings of all those concerned, including our Government which is the blindest of all, I cannot see how the fatal drift can be arrested. Even so I shall make a last attempt. I say to myself that if I am to be a Cassandra let me at least be a positive Cassandra. So I get up among the victims of Circe and address them:

> Friends, once comrades in a beastly fellowship! *Favete linguis*. Listen to a fellow-beast who has been lucky enough to find freedom and wants you to be free. See, Circe stands by and smiles mockingly. She thinks I cannot but fail. Demi-goddess! You are boastful, and your challenge provokes me to be so. Remember that it might still be said—*Scipsam virtute, Indiam exemplo.*
>
> Now, fellow-beasts! Do not heed her. This is what you have to do to break her spell.
>
> Cease to think of yourselves as Orientals, and never admit that there is any mental bond between you and true Asiatics.
>
> Expel the thousands of Western mercenaries whom you pay with your blood and have got into the habit of looking up to as your stable-boys, cowherds, shepherds, and swineherds, because their governments throw a handful of fodder or food to you. What they are really doing is to continue your servitude to Circe. You kicked *at* Western mercenaries in distant Congo, why do you cherish them at home? Gore them and kick them out of your own land.
>
> Say that we are Europeans in our own right, and we want no patronage. We shall take our destiny in our hands, create our life, and renovate our economy through our own strength, mental and physical.
>
> And in a moment the pelt, the skin, and the fur will fall off your backs, and you will be free again.

At this there is wild commotion among the victims of Circe. The depraved ones among them come yelling at me, as if they could harm me, the Aryan *redivivus*. With a refinement of cruelty Circe has kept them in the human shape but in a form which is even more repulsive than that of the Yahoos of Swift. Swift made them scraggy and hideous, and in turning away from them a decent man could feel that he was being uncharitable to them for an ugliness over which they had no control and not for their moral ugliness. But no decency can be offended by turning away from the new Hindu Yahoos. They are all plump, sleek, solemn, and even smiling when out after self-interest. They have no ugliness which is not of their own making.

BUT WHY SHOULD I concern myself with them? I have rescued my European soul from Circe, to whom it was a kind of happiness to be in thrall. I have accomplished another feat which was more difficult. I have recovered my Ariel's body from Sycorax, the terrible and malevolent hag who stands behind Circe in India. So I can and should ignore the Yahoos. But I would save the fellow beasts. They do not, however, listen to me. They honk, neigh, bellow, bleat, or grunt, and scamper away to their scrub, stable, byre, pen, and sty.

Tears now roll down the cheeks of Circe. The great sorceress weeps to see the completeness of her handiwork.

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Sartre's Marxism

By Raymond Aron

IN *La Critique de la raison dialectique*, Sartre constantly asserts the truth of Marxism and says there is no going beyond it, at least in our time.

> There was the period of Descartes and Locke, then the period of Kant and Hegel, and since then there has been the period of Marx. Each of the three philosophies has been in turn the soil from which all individual ideas sprang and has formed the cultural horizon. In each case, the philosophy has proved impossible to surpass during the continuance of the historical period of which it was the expression.

Similar statements, equally solemn in tone, occur frequently throughout the book: "I have said, and I repeat, that dialectical materialism is the only valid interpretation of the history of mankind. . . ."

If we ask what doctrine is referred to in these declarations of allegiance, we find that the essential discovery of Marxism is that labour is the true foundation on which social relationships are organised. Since the concept of the true foundation is no less ambiguous than that underlying the expression "in the last analysis," dear to Engels, I personally am quite prepared to

IN A PERSONAL NOTE, *accompanying the original French text (here translated by John Weightman), Professor Aron writes: "The author of* La Nausée, Huis Clos, L'Etre et le Néant *and* Les Mots *is undoubtedly a man of outstanding ability. Only the ignorant were unaware of this before the awarding of the Nobel Prize. Sartre may have remained unknown up to the time of the publication of* La Nausée, *but he was never unappreciated. A number of us, at the* Ecole Normale, *sensed his genius. But I am no fonder than the unwilling prize-winner himself of the kind of academic eulogies that have been showered on him recently; they are particularly pointless in his case since they are addressed to a committed writer and yet deliberately disregard the causes which his commitment is intended to serve.*

"I feel that it would not be fitting for me to make this an occasion for recalling memories of our youth together. Our friendship came to an end more than fifteen years ago, and although we now shake each other by the hand instead of proffering mutual abuse, we continue to live in different worlds. While enjoying those formal liberties that are more or less respected by the bourgeois democracies, Sartre reserves his sympathies for revolutionary régimes which, in his opinion, have the advantage of preparing the advent of true freedom. I think quite differently, but a settling of political accounts would be just as out of place to-day as a show of reconciliation or a harking back to the distant past.

"I should have much preferred to leave to others the task of commenting on Sartre's output, the richness and complexity of which cannot be dealt with in a hastily written journalistic article. I have finally yielded to editorial insistence, but I shall have to be excused for limiting myself to remarks on La Critique de la raison dialectique *which I re-read last summer. I make no claim to having exhausted the subject announced in the title. It is easy to show that Sartre, in spite of his efforts, does not manage to turn himself into a good Marxist, but why does he attach so much importance to being one? To adopt his vocabulary, his way of being a Marxist is by Being-what-one-is-not or Not-being-what-one-is. In more ordinary language, he is acting in good faith when he convinces himself of his belief in a form of Marxism which is rejected by the Marxist-Leninists and would probably have surprised Marx himself."*

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accept this essential discovery without, at the same time, aspiring to the honour of being a Marxist.

The vague and abstract statements of which the Marxism supported by Sartre seems to consist are made still less impressive by the fact that the entire aim of the section entitled: "The Question of Method" is to defend the *irreducibility* of the various spheres of human existence against bad Marxists. Referring to the thought of the Marquis de Sade, Sartre writes: "an ideological system is an irreducible entity" and that the idea must be studied in all its developments. Nor does he hesitate "to recognise the originality of the socio-political groups thus formed and to define them in their very complexity, in spite of their incomplete development and their distorted objectification." Similarly, Existentialism can only assert the specific nature of the historical event; it endeavours to restore to that event its function and its multiple dimensions.

Thus, on the one hand, Sartre declares his unconditional allegiance to Marxism, but to a Marxism rather restricted in content, while, on the other hand, he reintroduces the event, the individual, the autonomy of socio-political groups and the irreducibility of the productions of the mind into history. It is true, that, according to him, he is merely going back to the original Marxist text. Marxists may be incapable of reading it, but obviously that is their fault, not the fault of Marx. During the Stalinist period particularly, he says, Marxists went in for a sort of voluntarist idealism. Instead of slowly deciphering the complex reality of human history, they proceeded in an arbitrary manner, mechanically applying their interpretative grid without even bothering to acquaint themselves with the facts. They remained ignorant of the multifarious mediations between the production process and actual experience. Marxism is the unsurpassable philosophy of our time but it has become totally sterile in the 20th century.

THE PROBLEM IS, THEN, to resuscitate and renew Marxism. Sartre hopes to achieve this not through an original interpretation of the age we live in but through providing Marx's Marxism with a philosophical foundation in Existentialism rather than in materialism, or at least in a materialism compatible with Existentialism.

Sartre's ambition, as he himself defines it, is to reintroduce man into Marxist knowledge.

> He [Sartre] does not, like Kierkegaard reacting against Hegel, contrast the irrational peculiarity of the individual with universal knowledge. But he seeks to reintroduce the unsurpassable peculiarity of human existence into knowledge itself and into the universality of concepts.

This statement throws light on the philosophical aim of the author of *L'Etre et le Néant*, since events prompted him to move from ontology to *ontic*, from man "as a useless passion" to historical man in search of himself and of truth.

SARTRE'S attitude towards Marxism involves four kinds of judgment.

1. As far as materialistic metaphysics or objective dialectics are concerned, he is explicit, categorical, and negative. However strong his desire to co-operate with the Stalinists may have been, he has never made any concessions at the expense of the principles of his own philosophy.

2. As regards Marx's economico-historical sociology, Sartre usually takes the view that it consists of established or self-evident truths. He writes, for instance: "None of these remarks relating to form can, of course, claim to add anything at all to the self-evident truth of the synthetic reconstruction achieved by Marx in *Das Kapital*; they are not even intended to be a marginal commentary on that reconstruction which, precisely because of its self-evident truth, does not admit of any commentary."

This pronouncement, which is hard on the innumerable writers of commentaries, illustrates Sartre's facile acceptance of all those aspects of Marxist thought in which he is not particularly interested, but which were the essential things for Marx himself—for instance, the synthetic reconstruction of capitalism.

3. As regards political action, if it is agreed to apply the term Marxist to the militant members of Communist Parties, Sartre has never been a Marxist, although he has been a para-Marxist since 1945. Apart from the short-lived experiment some fifteen years ago of the *Rassemblement démocratique populaire*, he has been, typically, a fellow-traveller. He has never, to the slightest degree, sacrificed his freedom of thought, but he has adopted partisan attitudes which have seemed all the more exasperating through his maintaining that they were not partisan. He has, on occasions, criticised Soviet Russia—for instance, at the time of the Hungarian Revolution—but he has consciously and deliberately applied two different yardsticks. The significance of torture or concentration camps has varied according to the nature of the régime or the party in power. For his own sake, one would have liked the philosopher of freedom to denounce the personality cult before Chairman Khrushchev did so. In spite of his non-conformism, Sartre has not altogether avoided Left-wing conformism.

4. This brings us to the final and most interesting aspect of the problem. *La Critique de la raison dialectique* remains within the con-

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cepts of historical materialism and the class-struggle. The publication of a further volume has already been announced. The aim of the first one is to renew Marxism by re-introducing existence into it, and taking the individual consciousness as the starting-point. Sartrian criticism is intended to stand in the same relationship to Marxism as Kantian criticism (according to what we were taught at school) stood in relationship to Newtonian physics. Sartre is endeavouring to demonstrate the possibility of a *single* history which will be the progressive working out of the truth.

IN *La Critique*, Sartre tends to use the concept of *praxis* to describe individual action, and he even devotes a few pages to discussing the relationship between the living organism and its setting through the mediation of need. We should not be misled by this change of vocabulary; there is no decisive difference between what he now calls the individual *praxis* or constituent dialectic and the Being-for-oneself in *L'Etre et le Néant*. The individual *praxis*, like consciousness, is a pro-ject (a throwing forward), at once a retention of the past and a self-translucid transcending of it in the direction of the future, a total apprehension both of the situation and the aim. History would be perfectly dialectical, that is perfectly comprehensible, if it were the history of a single man. It remains intelligible because it is made up of human actions, each of which is comprehensible as an individual *praxis* or translucid act of consciousness.

The Sartrian dialectic does not begin from the dialogue, that is, from the encounter of the *I* and the *Thou*. It is the encounter with the *Other* which creates a threat to the liberty of each individual. This is not to say that the *Other* treats me spontaneously as the object of his action and thereby submits me to his will. But since consciousness as *praxis* is an operative consciousness, the relationship of the individual man with nature and other men through the mediation of fashioned matter (the tool), the risk of alienation is inherent in the relationships between individuals. To be authentically human, these relationships must be founded on reciprocity or equality (both terms occur in the book). A philosophy which denies the existence of such a thing as human nature must find some substitute criterion by which to determine what is to be judged as inhuman. This criterion is reciprocity:

> The *praxis* of one person, in its practical structure and for the accomplishment of its project, recognises the *praxis* of the Other, *i.e.*, in the last resort, it considers the duality of activities as a non-essential characteristic and the unity of the *praxeis* (plural) as such as an essential characteristic.

In the actual history of mankind, this reciprocity is hardly ever to be found because of the phenomenon of *scarcity*. What animal species could be more dangerous for man than an intelligent, skilful species which sets out to deprive me of my means of livelihood? This animal species is none other than mankind itself, at once the victim and prisoner of scarcity, which makes every individual his neighbour's enemy. Thus it is that scarcity, on which the classical economists founded their theories, brings us back to Hobbes' vision of mankind: *homo homini lupus*.

HISTORY IS NOT governed by necessity. It has its origin and its intelligible foundation in a contingent fact, co-existent with the life of our species on this planet: the lack of resources in relation to the number of mouths to be fed. This lack condemns all societies to eliminate certain of their actual or possible members either after birth or before. An obscure awareness of it is interiorised in the human consciousness and creates the climate of scarcity which is, at the same time, the climate of violence in which all human history takes place.

This first phase of Sartre's critical process is obviously foreign to the thought not only of Marxists, but also of Engels or Marx. Neither of them goes back beyond the ancient societies, *i.e.*, socialised man. The division of labour or violence (preferably the former) seemed to them to be the source of the class-struggle, which they did not attribute explicitly either to human nature or to a Hegelian dialectical relationship between master and slave. They were more interested in the historical mechanism of the class-struggle than in the "transcendental deduction" to be drawn from it. However, it does not necessarily follow that the Sartrian conception, on the transcendental level on which it is expressed, is incompatible with Marx's inspiration. At any rate, it allows Sartre to open up an avenue of escape from the hopeless world of *L'Etre et le Néant* and *Huis Clos*. Man's inhumanity to man has an ontologically accidental cause. Volume II of *La Critique* will presumably take us beyond scarcity and show us the dawn of the age of plenty and of reciprocal consciousness.

SCARCITY, which sets the dialectic of history in motion, would not produce such consequences if the freedom of the individual *praxis* were not immediately threatened by the *praxeis* of others. Or again, to use a different form of language, each of us is a pro-ject, a total appre-

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hension of our environment in terms of the perceived situation and the end in view. How can innumerable liberties co-exist without reciprocal subjugation? The answer is that, as a matter of fact, they cannot, at least not in a world of scarcity: consciousnesses are objectified in their works and this objectification turns into alienation because the opposing consciousnesses deprive it of significance, or distort its significance. All individual freedoms are finally bogged down in what Sartre calls the *practico-inert*, the thing-iness of the social organisation, to which everyone is subject as if it were a form of physical necessity; it is a necessity which remains intelligible because it derives from the free *praxeis* of individuals, but it is, in a way, a negation of that liberty.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote: "Man was born free and he is everywhere in chains." According to Sartre, man is free by his very nature, or rather he has no nature because, being free, he decides for himself, but everywhere man is the instrument of man and can nowhere exercise his liberty without violating that of others.

THE CONCEPT OF the *series*, illustrated by the well-known example of the queue of people waiting for the bus at Saint-Germain-des-Prés, characterises relationships between individuals in their submission to the practico-inert. The members of the queue are together but they do not see each other. They are standing in line, and only the accidental order of their arrival, not the urgency of their journey, will determine the order of their getting into the bus. Each of them is going about his own business and knows nothing of the concerns of the others. They have nothing in common except their need of a means of transport, and the phenomenon of scarcity (there will not be room for all of them) turns them into potential enemies.

IT GOES without saying that the various collectives that Sartre analyses in turn are not all as simple as this. Still, even a class is fundamentally only a collective of the serial type. The proletariat, in a state of repose and as an objective entity, is no more than a scattered plurality, subject to internal conflicts and characterised by the enslavement of the free *praxeis* of individuals not only to the employers or the organisation of labour but also to the general context of the practico-inert, of which its innumerable members inevitably form part. How could things be otherwise? Each member of the proletariat is born into a social situation which is not of his own choosing; he interiorises that objective situation, not because he has lost his freedom but because he has no other way of exercising it. Within the existing framework, the members of the proletariat have, up to a point, a common being, but they are divided precisely by the divisions of society.

Only within a common undertaking do the individual *praxeis* succeed in overcoming their isolation, their rivalries, and their enslavement one to another and to the general context of the practico-inert. The common undertaking is the collective project, the single goal towards which all the consciousnesses, fused into one and the same act of will, are striving. A queue at a bus-stop symbolises *serial collectives*; the crowd which stormed the Bastille symbolises *the group*. At once, there is a reversal of meanings: number, which in the collectives was a source of dispersal, solitude and enslavement, becomes a factor of confidence and dynamic action. The crowd storming the Bastille has only one soul and, as it were, only one consciousness. The proletariat is a form of being, an *exis*, in which the individual consciousnesses participate but within which they are alienated; the active group, the first distinguished by the critical process, the crowd storming the Bastille, restores their lost liberty to the individual *praxeis*.

Thus the fusion of individuals within a revolutionary crowd becomes a symbol of collective liberation.

WE CANNOT storm a new Bastille every day. Although I am fighting side by side with my fellow-campaigners to-day, I have not renounced my freedom. To-morrow I may betray them, or at least I cannot be sure that I shall not be involved in a betrayal: my own freedom does not allow me to dispose of my future. I cannot but mistrust myself, and that is why the group can only be formed by each member pledging himself to grant the others the right to punish him if he breaks his word. The group demands a pledge and calls for the exercise of terror. Threatened by external enemies and still more so by internal decomposition, it survives as an expression of will-power and as an active agent, thanks to the freely granted submission of all its members to the requirements of the common undertaking.

The proletariat as a group emerges from the class as a collective by, and in, action. But the group, once it has come into being, is subject in its turn to the obligations of social existence. It, too, must share out tasks, differentiate between functions, assign each individual to his appropriate place and exact obedience. It, too, is in danger of degenerating into that inertia against which it revolted. It, too, must evolve its institutions and become a quasi-organism, *i.e.*, lose the translucidity of the two fully comprehensible *praxeis*, that of the single individual

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and that of the fused group (the crowd storming the Bastille).

This being so, in what way is the institutionalised group to be distinguished from the collectives which went to make up the practico-inert? It remains different from them in so far as it retains something of the single manifestation of will-power which gave rise to the undertaking, and in so far as the members of the group do not forget the vow of fidelity by which they are bound.

THE DIALECTIC of the *series* and the *group*, of the *practico-inert* and revolutionary *praxis*, is obviously Sartrian, not Marxist. It supposes that individual action is the only dialectical and practical reality, the motive force behind everything, and that the act of revolt is, as it were, "the beginning of humanity."

But although it claims not to be in conflict with the Marxist vision of historical becoming, such a dialectic suggests instead an endless alternation of alienation and revolution. Individuals allow themselves to be gradually caught within a social order more and more comparable to physical necessity, then reassert their human dignity through revolt and organise a revolution which, in its turn, once it has been institutionalised, will fall back into inertia and lose that single force of will-power which alone differentiated it from the practico-inert.

The theory of the group, and the contrast between the working-class as a collective entity and the revolutionary group as *praxis*, might be considered as a philosophical justification of Bolshevik practice and of the substitution of the party for the class as the subject of history. But I do not think that this kind of justification would reassure ideologists in Moscow or Peking.

ADMITTEDLY, Sartre explains that the Stalinist phase was inevitable.

> Historical experience has undoubtedly shown that the initial phase of Socialist society in course of construction, considered on the still abstract level of power, could only be an indissoluble aggregation of bureaucracy, terror, and the personality cult.

This sentence will arouse the indignation of some readers, because it puts the stamp of historical necessity on an historical phenomenon which is still dripping with fresh blood. However, it strikes me as being mainly naïve. I am not much impressed by retrospective demonstrations tending to prove that what has happened could not have turned out otherwise. Any philosopher of talent can successfully undertake such demonstrations, provided, of course, he is not called upon to apply the method to the future.

As for the orthodox thinkers in Moscow and Peking, they cannot welcome the heretical idea which introduces the demonstration just summarised:

> The reason why the dictatorship of the proletariat has never, at any moment, occurred—as the actual exercising of power through the totalisation of the working class—is that the very notion is absurd, since it is a bastard compromise between the active and sovereign group and passive seriality.

WHAT HOPE OF renewal does *La Critique* hold out for Marxism? To establish a radical distinction, as Sartre does, between analytical and dialectical reason, between the natural sciences and the study of man, between the unintelligibility of natural phenomena and the intrinsic intelligibility of history is to break not only with the Marxism of Lenin and Engels but also with that of Marx himself. The repeated statement that the individual *praxis* is the final condition of intelligibility, the only practical and dialectical reality, imposes on a philosophy which aims at a total interpretation of history a task that Sartre himself, in spite of his efforts, cannot bring to completion.

How can all the varieties of lived experience be fitted into Marxist knowledge without it being disrupted or the experiences themselves being blurred? If authentic reality is made up only of men, their actions, their sufferings or their dreams, how can their individual existences, each of which is unique and irreplaceable, be totalised? How can one pass from these multifarious points of view—since each individual sees history from his particular angle—to a single truth, which would constitute a system of knowledge and would not eliminate individuals from the realm of thought as pitilessly as wars and revolutions eliminate them from the world of fact? Why should the formal and static dialectics of the practico-inert and of action, of the series and the group, come to an end before the end of scarcity? As a matter of fact, Sartre himself seems to doubt whether his dialectic can come to an end, and (in the conclusion to a note on p. 349) he asks the question: "Will the disappearance of capitalist forms of alienation be synonymous with the abolition of all forms of alienation?" He may well ask; the answer is not necessarily in the affirmative.

IT IS POINTLESS to enquire whether or not the thought of one philosopher is in agreement with that of another. It has obviously not been my intention to grant, or refuse, Sartre the right to call himself a Marxist; in any case, my authorisation would be neither here nor there. I wanted to point out to what an extent

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he has remained unchanged. This is not to say that *L'Etre et le Néant* foreshadows *La Critique de la raison dialectique*. On the contrary, the latter marks a distinct development in relation to the former, and each reader must decide for himself whether it is to be considered as progress or decline.

In one place only does Sartre explicitly reject a point of view put forward in *L'Etre et le Néant*:

> Fundamental alienation is not, as *L'Etre et le Néant* might wrongly lead the reader to suppose, an effect of pre-natal choice: it is an effect of the univocal relationship of interiority uniting man, as a practical organism, to his environment.

Alienation, like the conflict of consciousnesses, must have its origin in society; otherwise we find ourselves going back to Hobbes, not to Marx. But since Sartre accepts Marx's concrete interpretations of actual history wholeheartedly and uncritically, he concentrates all his energies on a phenomenologico-existential analysis, which is concerned only with the Hegelian elements in Marxist thought and is, above all, typically Sartrian. It is a subtle and bitter analysis, charged with resentment and abstract generosity, distinguished by a sometimes admirable, sometimes exasperating, verbal virtuosity, and occasionally too simple in the opposites it postulates: in fact the life of men in society oscillates inevitably between the series and the group, between alienation and freedom; according to circumstances, the humanisation of the relationships between individuals—the impulse towards reciprocity between the *praxeis*—calls for violence or can be reconciled with reformism.

I DO NOT THINK that Sartre has achieved his aim of renewing Marxism which, in the hands of the Stalinists, congealed into a sterile dogmatism. Marx's inspiration and method are to-day an integral part of the collective consciousness and continue to bear fruit. In Moscow and in the so-called People's Democracies, a body of doctrine, an ideological catechism, has been raised to the level of a State truth. The Marxist-Leninists who, willingly or unwillingly, subscribe to this State truth, are quite consistent in rejecting *La Critique*, because it expresses a slightly Marxianised Sartrism or—if a different formulation is preferred—a Marxism that has been recast in the Sartrian mode.

The critical process carried out in these 755 pages[1] may interest philosophers, but it is not very helpful to sociologists, economists, and historians, who find in it either well-known ideas translated into a difficult vocabulary or categorical assertions relating to some mysterious dialectical reason, in the absence of which, says Sartre,

> nothing that is said or written about ourselves and our fellow-men, either in the East or the West—not a sentence, not a single word—can be anything other than grossly mistaken.

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING that I myself must be involved in this wholesale condemnation, but since I have to conclude, I shall do so in the manner which, according to Simone de Beauvoir, was characteristic of me during our interminable discussions when we were young.[2] Sartre cannot have it both ways. If he is trying to renew the Marxist-Leninism of Moscow and Peking, he is wasting his time, because State truths or official ideologies obey their own laws, which are not those of the free enquiry practised by Sartre himself. If he wants to renew Marxist thought in the West, he should model himself on Marx, that is, analyse the capitalist *and* socialist societies of the 20th century, as Marx analysed the capitalist societies of the 19th century. Marxism cannot be renewed by going back from *Das Kapital* to the *Economico-Philosophical Manuscript*, or by trying to achieve some impossible reconciliation between Kierkegaard and Marx.

In short, it would be better to write the *Das Kapital* of the 20th century, instead of proclaiming allegiance to the *Das Kapital* of the 19th.

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[1] The first volume was published by Gallimard in 1960. The prefatory essay has recently been translated into English as *The Problem of Method* (Methuen, London, and Knopf, New York).

[2] *Editor's Note.* In her autobiographical memoir of the early '30s, Simone de Beauvoir writes (in *The Prime of Life*): "We saw a good deal of Raymond Aron.... He was a member of the Socialist Party, an organisation which we despised—firstly on the grounds that it was infiltrated by the bourgoisie, and secondly because we were temperamentally opposed to the idea of reform: society, we felt, could change only as a result of sudden cataclysmic upheaval on a global scale. But we hardly ever talked politics with Aron. Mostly he and Sartre argued bitterly about problems of philosophy. I took no part in these discussions, since my mind moved too slowly for them; nevertheless I found myself more often than not on Aron's side....

"Aron enjoyed critical analysis, and set himself to tear Sartre's rash syntheses to bits. He had the knack of getting his opponent in the fork of a dilemma and then crushing him with one sharp hammer stroke. 'There are two alternatives, *mon petit camarade*,' he would say. 'Take your choice.'... Sartre struggled hard to avoid being cornered, but as there was more imagination than logic in his mental processes, he had his work cut out. I cannot recall one occasion on which he convinced Aron—or on which Aron succeeded in shaking Sartre's own beliefs...."

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MUSIC

Schoenberg's "Moses and Aaron"

By George Steiner

IT IS DIFFICULT to conceive of a work in which music and language interact more closely than in Arnold Schoenberg's *Moses und Aron*. (The German title has an advantage of which Schoenberg, half in humour, half in superstition, was aware: its twelve letters are a symbolic counterpart to the twelve tones which form a basic set in serial composition.) It is, therefore, impertinent to write about the opera if one is unable to analyse its powerful, immensely original musical structure. This analysis has been undertaken by several musicologists and students of Schoenberg.[1] One would only wish that the intrinsic difficulty of the subject had not been aggravated by the "initiate" technicality of their approach. This is especially true of the account of the music written by Milton Babbit and issued with the only recording so far available of *Moses and Aaron* (Columbia K-31-241).

If I write this programme note, it is because the great majority of those in the audience at Covent Garden will be in my position; they do not have the training or knowledge needed to grasp the technical unfolding of the score. The demands made are, in fact, severely beyond those required by a classical composition, or even by the orchestral density of Mahler. Together we shall have to take comfort in Schoenberg's frequent admonition:

> I cannot often enough warn against the overrating of analysis since it invariably leads to what I have always fought against: the knowledge of how something is *made*; whereas I have always tried to promote the knowledge of what something *is*.

And one recalls Kierkegaard's observation at the outset of his discussion of *Don Giovanni*:

> though I feel that music is an art which to the highest degree requires experience to justify one in having an opinion about it, still I comfort myself... with the paradox that, even in ignorance and mere intimations, there is also a kind of experience.

In the case of *Moses and Aaron* I would go further. It belongs to that very small group of operas which embody so radical and comprehensive an act of imagination, of dramatic and philosophic argument articulated by poetic and musical means, that there are aspects of it which go well beyond the normal analysis of an operatic score. It belongs not only to the history of modern music—in a salient way, as it exemplifies the application of Schoenberg's principles on a large, partly conventional scale—but to the history of the modern theatre, of modern theology, of the relationship between Judaism and the European crisis. These aspects do not define or in any way exhaust the meaning of the work; that meaning is fundamentally musical. But an account of them may prove helpful to those who approach the work for the first time, and who would place it in its historical and emotional context. Like other very great and difficult works of art, Schoenberg's opera goes decisively outside the confines of its *genre* while giving to that *genre* a new and seemingly obvious fulfilment.

IN A LETTER to Alban Berg of October 16th, 1933, when he had just returned formally to Judaism in the face of Nazi anti-semitism, Schoenberg wrote:

> As you have doubtless realised, my return to the Jewish religion took place long ago and is

[1] The most complete discussion of the work is to be found in Karl H. Wörner: *Schoenberg's "Moses and Aaron"* (trans. P. Hamburger, London 1963). Among the most important technical discussions of the music are those by Hans Keller in *The Score* (No. 21, 1957), and W. Zillig in *Melos, Zeitschrift für Neue Musik* (vol. 3, 1957). A fascinating, though often quirky and unnecessarily obscure survey of the philosophic and historical background of the opera may be found in T. W. Adorno: *"Sakrales Fragment: Ueber Schoenberg's Moses und Aron"* (a lecture delivered in Berlin in April 1963 and reprinted that same year in Adorno's *Quasi una fantasia*).

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> indeed demonstrated in some of my published work (*"Thou shalt not, thou must"*) as well as in *Moses and Aaron*, of which you have known since 1928, but which dates from at least five years earlier; but especially in my drama *The Biblical Way* which was also conceived in 1922 or '23 at the latest.[2]

Der Biblische Weg remains unpublished; but what is known about it points clearly to the theme of the opera. It tells of a Zionist visionary, in whose name, Max Arun, there may be a foreshadowing of Moses and Aaron, who fails to achieve his goal through human imperfection. Equally relevant is the other piece referred to by Schoenberg, the second of the *Four Pieces* for mixed chorus, op. 27. Written in 1925, it sets to music the prohibition of Mosaic law against the making of images. "An image asks for names.... Thou shalt believe in the Spirit; thou must, chosen one." This injunction, expressed in a cadenced prose which anticipates the "spoken song" of the opera, summarises the central dramatic idea and conflict of *Moses and Aaron*. But Schoenberg's interest in the musical statement of religious thought and in the dramatic idiom of the Old Testament goes back even further: to *Die Jakobsleiter*, an oratorio left incomplete in 1917.

This concern persisted throughout Schoenberg's later work: in the *Kol Nidre* of 1938, in the brief, harrowing cantata *A Survivor from Warsaw* (1947), in the setting of Psalm 130 (1950), in Schoenberg's final opus, the unfinished *Modern Psalms*. The last words he set to music were: "And yet I pray as all that lives prays." Thus *Moses and Aaron* is thematically and psychologically related to an entire set of works in which Schoenberg sought to express his highly individual, though at the same time profoundly Judaic concept of identity, of the act of spiritual creation, and of the dialogue—so inherent in music—between the song of man and the silences of God. The opera is both Schoenberg's *magnum opus* (what T. W. Adorno calls his *"Hauptwerk quand-même"*) and a composition rooted in the logic and development of his entire musical thought.

SCHOENBERG BEGAN writing *Moses and Aaron* in Berlin in May 1930; he completed Act II in Barcelona on March 10th, 1932. Roberto Gerhard, in whose Barcelona flat Schoenberg often worked, tells an instructive anecdote. Schoenberg did not mind friends chatting in the room, even when he was engaged on the fantastically complex score; what he could not tolerate were sudden spells of quiet. The dates of composition are, of course, important. On the one hand they mark Schoenberg's hard-fought professional acceptance, as Busoni's successor at the Prussian Academy of Arts. But they also mark bouts of illness which led Schoenberg to seek refuge in a southern climate, and, above all, the rise of the Nazi menace. A year after he had completed Act II, Schoenberg was compelled to leave Berlin and start a life of exile.

He did not live to complete the opera or hear it performed. An extract was given in concert form at Darmstadt on July 2nd, 1951 (plans for a production at the *Maggio Musicale* in Florence fell through). Schoenberg died less than a fortnight later. The first complete concert programme was given at the Musikhalle in Hamburg under the direction of Hans Rosbaud in March 1954. On June 16th, 1957, Rosbaud directed the stage *première* of *Moses und Aron* at the Stadttheater in Zurich. This was followed by a Berlin production under Hermann Scherchen in October 1959. Since that time there have been few major opera houses in Europe or the United States which have not expressed the hope of producing the work, and retreated before its formidable exactions. Talk about a performance at Covent Garden goes back several years.

Karl Wörner says that *Moses and Aaron* "is without precedent." This is not so: as opera, it is related to Wagner's *Parsifal*, and there are orchestral anticipations both in Mahler and in Schoenberg's own *Erwartung* and *Die Glückliche Hand*. But it *is* technically more demanding than any other major opera, and the quality of the religious-philosophic conflict requires from the performers and producer an unusual range of insight and sympathy. Schoenberg has deliberately used a *genre* saturated with 19th-century values of unreality and modish display to express an ultimate seriousness. In so doing he re-opened the entire question of opera.

THE LIBRETTO is organised wholly in terms of musical form and development (if serial music anticipates electronic music it is in the totality of control which the composer aims at in every aspect of the musical experience). As Schoenberg remarked: "It is only while I'm composing that the text becomes definite, sometimes even after composition." Nevertheless, the book of *Moses and Aaron* is itself of great fascination. Schoenberg has a distinctive style which one sees in his paintings and theoretical writings no less than in his music. He worked in large strokes, and achieved an effect of clarity and abstract energy by leaving out syntactical qualifications or half-tones. Like much in Schoenberg's musical texts and literary tastes, the libretto

[2] All quotations are from the *Letters*, ed. by Erwin Stein (London, 1964).

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shows traces of German expressionism, and of the sources of expressionism. Characteristically, Strindberg plays a part: Schoenberg knew *Wrestling Jacob* when he planned *Die Jakobsleiter*, and was aware of Strindberg's *Moses* when writing his own very different treatment of the theme.

The idiom used in *Moses and Aaron* is highly personal. It is kept apart from the rhythms and tonality of the Luther Bible. Schoenberg wrote to Berg on August 5th, 1930: "I am of the opinion that the language of the Bible is medieval German, which, being obscure to us, should be used at most to give colour; and that is something I don't need." Above all, each German word, whether in *Sprechgesang*, in direct song or choral declaration, is uniquely and precisely fitted to the musical context. The words are no less *durchkomponiert* ("fully composed, musicalised") than are the notes. This is what makes the decision to produce *Moses and Aaron* in English so wrong-headed. To alter the words—their cadence, stress, tonalities—as must be done in translation, is tantamount to altering the key relations or orchestration in a piece of classical music. Moreover, there is no need to subvert Schoenberg in this way: the story of *Exodus* is known to everyone, and Schoenberg's presentation of the plot is utterly lucid. A brief outline would have given an English-speaking audience all the help it wants.

THE RELATIONSHIP of language to music in *Moses and Aaron* is unlike that in any other opera. The problem of that relationship, of how to apportion the stress between word and musical tone, of whether the ideal libretto should not be weak precisely in order to mark the distance between music drama and the spoken play, underlies the whole history of opera. As Joseph Kerman has shown, it is the problematic achievement of Wagner, the late Verdi, and 20th-century operatic composers to have given the libretto a new seriousness. Hence the marked relationship to modern literature and psychological argument in the operas of Janáček, Berg, and Stravinsky. Hence the ironic allegoric treatment of the debate between poet and composer in Richard Strauss' *Ariadne*.

But *Moses and Aaron* goes much deeper. It belongs to that group of works produced in the 20th century, and crucial to our present relationship to art, which have their own possibility as essential theme. I mean that it asks of itself—as Kafka does of fiction, as Klee asks of visual form—whether the thing can be done at all, whether there are modes of communication adequate. Kierkegaard wrote of Mozart: "The happy characteristic that belongs to every classic, that which makes it classic and immortal, is the absolute harmony of the two forces, form and content." One would say of modern art that what makes it such and unmistakable to our sensibility is the frequent dissonance between moral, psychological content and traditional form. Being a drama of non-communication, of the primal resistance of intuitive or revealed insight to verbal and plastic incarnation (the refusal of the word to be made flesh), *Moses and Aaron* is, on one vital plane, an opera about opera. It is a demonstration of the impossibility of finding an exhaustive accord between language and music, between sensual presentment and the enormous urgency and purity of intended meaning. By making the dramatic conflict one between a man who speaks and a man who sings, Schoenberg has argued to the limit the paradoxical convention, the compromise with the unreal, inherent in all opera.

The paradox is resolved in defeat, in a great cry of necessary silence. This alone makes it difficult to think of a serious opera coming after or going beyond *Moses and Aaron*. But that was exactly Schoenberg's own problem as a post-Wagnerian, and as an heir to Mahler in artistic morality even more than in orchestral technique. Like Mahler he was proposing to aggravate, in the literal sense, the easy coexistence, the *libertinage* between music and public which obtained in the opera house at the turn of the century and which Strauss, for all his musical integrity, never refuted. As Adorno notes, *Moses and Aaron* can be approached in the same spirit as a major cantata of Bach. But unlike Bach, it is a work which at every moment calls to account its own validity and expressive means.

THE MOTIF of a sharp conflict between Moses and Aaron is, of course, present in the Pentateuch. It may well be that later priestly editors, with their particular professional relationship to Aaron's priesthood, smoothed away some of the grimmer evidence, and obscured the full, murderous consequences of the clash. Schoenberg made of this archaic, obscure antagonism a conflict of ultimate moral and personal values, of irreconcilable formulations or metaphors of man's confrontation with God. Working on the principle—discernible at the roots of Greek tragic drama—that fundamental human conflict is internal, that dramatic dialogue is in the final analysis between self and self, Schoenberg gathered the entire force of collision into a single consciousness.

THIS IS THE DRAMA of Moses. Aaron is one of the possibilities (the most seductive, the most humane) of Moses' self-betrayals. He

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is Moses' voice when that voice yields to imperfect truth and to the music of compromise. Schoenberg remarked in 1933: "My Moses more resembles—of course only in outward respect—Michelangelo's. He is not human at all." So far as the harsh, larger-than-life stature of the personage goes, this may be so. But the poignancy of the opera, its precise focus of emotion and suffering, comes above all from Moses' humanity, from that in him which is riven and inarticulate. It is not of the fiercely contained eloquence of Michelangelo's statue that one thinks when listening to *Moses and Aaron*, but of Alban Berg's *Wozzeck* (written just before Schoenberg started composing his own opera). Moses and Wozzeck are both brilliant studies in dramatic contradiction, operatic figures unable to articulate with their own voices the fullness of their needs and perceptions. In both cases the music takes over where the human voice is strangled or where it retreats into desperate silence.

Schoenberg admitted to Berg: "Everything I have written has a certain inner likeness to myself." This is obviously true of Moses, and it is here that Michelangelo's figure, which fascinated Freud in a similar way, may be relevant. To any Jew initiating a great movement of spirit or radical doctrine in a profoundly hostile environment, leading a small group of disciples, some of them perhaps recalcitrant or ungrateful, to the promised land of a new metaphysic or aesthetic medium, the archetype of Moses would have a natural significance. By introducing into music, whose classical development and modes seemed to embody the very genius of the Christian and Germanic tradition, a new syntax, an uncompromisingly rational and apparently dissonant ideal, Schoenberg was performing an act of great psychological boldness and complexity. Going far beyond Mahler, he was asserting a revolutionary—to its enemies an alien, Jewish—presence in the world of Bach and Wagner. Thus the twelve-tone system is related, in point of sensibility and psychological context, to the imaginative radicalism, to the "subversiveness" of Cantor's mathematics or Wittgenstein's epistemology.

Like Freud, Schoenberg saw himself as a pioneer and teacher, reviled by the vast majority of his contemporaries, driven into solitude by his own unbending genius, gathering a small band around him and going forward, in exile, to a new world of meaning and vital possibility. In Moses' bitter cry that his lessons are not being understood, that his vision is being distorted even by those nearest him, one hears Schoenberg's own inevitable moments of discouragement and angry loneliness. And there is almost too apt an analogy in the fact that he died on the threshold of acceptance, before his stature had been widely acknowledged, before he could complete *Moses and Aaron* or hear any of it performed.

Except for one moment (I, 2, bars 208–17)—and I have never understood just why it should be at *this* particular point in the opera—Moses does not sing. He speaks in a highly cadenced, formal discourse, his voice loud and bitter against the fluencies of the music and, in particular, against Aaron's soaring tenor. (The parodistic yet profoundly engaged treatment of Aaron's vocal score seems to me full of references to traditional operatic *bel canto* and the ideal of the Wagnerian *Heldentenor*.) The fact that the protagonist of a grand opera should not sing is a powerful theatrical stroke, even more "shocking" than the long silence of Aeschylus' Cassandra or the abrupt, single intervention of the mute Pylades in *The Libation Bearers*. But it is also much more than that.

Moses' incapacity to give expressive form (music) to his vision, to make revelation communicable and thus translate his individual communion with God into a community of belief in Israel, is the tragic subject of the opera. Aaron's contrasting eloquence, his instantaneous translation—hence traduction—of Moses' abstract, hidden meaning into sensuous form (the singing voice), dooms the two men to irreconcilable conflict. Moses cannot do without Aaron; Aaron is the tongue which God has placed into his own inarticulate mouth. But Aaron diminishes or betrays Moses' thought, that in him which is immediate revelation, in the very act of communicating it to other men. As in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, there is in *Moses and Aaron* a radical consideration of silence, an inquiry into the ultimately tragic gap between what is apprehended and that which can be said. Words distort; eloquent words distort absolutely.

This is implicit in the first lines of the opera spoken by Moses against the background of the orchestral opening and the murmur of the six solo voices which portray the Burning Bush. The fact that Moses so often speaks simultaneously with Aaron's song, or that we hear his voice in conflict with the orchestra, points to Schoenberg's essential design: Moses' words are internal, they are his thought, clear and integral only before it moves outward into the betrayal of speech.

MOSES ADDRESSES his God as "omnipresent, invisible, and inconceivable." *Unvorstellbar*, that which cannot be imagined, conceived, or represented (*vorstellen* means, precisely, to enact, to mime, to dramatise con-

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cretely), is the key-word of the opera. God is *because* He is incommensurate to human imagining, because no symbolic representation available to man can realise even the minutest fraction of His inconceivable omnipresence. To know this, to serve a Deity so intangible to human mimesis, is the unique, magnificent destiny which Moses envisions for his people. It is also a fearful destiny. As the Voice out of the Burning Bush proclaims:

> *This people is chosen*
> *before all others,*
> *to be the people of the only God,*
> *that it should know Him*
> *and be wholly His;*
> *that it undergo all trials*
> *conceivable to thought*
> *over the millennia.*

The last two lines are eloquently ambiguous: the words can also be read to mean: "all trials to which this thought—of a God invisible and inconceivable—may be exposed."

Aaron enters and the misunderstanding between the two brothers is immediate and fatal. Aaron rejoices in the proud uniqueness of Israel's mission, in the grandeur of a God so much more powerful and demanding than all other gods (these other gods continue to be real to Aaron). He exults in *imagining* such a God, in finding words and poetic symbols by which to make Him present to His people. Yet even as he sings, Moses cries out: "No image can give you an image of the unimaginable." And when Aaron elaborates, with a rich ease of perception mirrored in the music, the notion of a God who will punish and reward His people according to their deserts, Moses proclaims a Kierkegaardian God, infinitely, scandalously transcending any human sense of cause and effect:

> *Inconceivable because invisible;*
> *because immeasurable;*
> *because everlasting;*
> *because eternal;*
> *because omnipresent;*
> *because omnipotent.*

To which litany of abstraction, of inexpressible apprehension, Aaron responds with the joyous assurance that God shall bring wonders to pass on behalf of His enslaved people.

He does. Confronted with the mutinous bewilderment of the Jews, with their call for visible signs of the new revelation, Moses retreats into his own inarticulateness. It is Aaron who proclaims himself the word and the deed. It is he who casts Moses' rod to the ground where it turns into a serpent, and shows Moses' hand to be leprous and then miraculously restored. During the entire last part of the Act, Moses is silent. It is Aaron who proclaims the doom of Pharaoh and the covenant of the Promised Land. Fired by his eloquence, the people of Israel march forth and the music is exultant with Aaron's certitude. It is through him that God appears to be speaking.

In one sense, in one possible idiom, He is. Moses' understanding of God is much more authentic, much deeper; but it is essentially mute or accessible only to very few. Without Aaron, God's purpose cannot be accomplished; through Aaron it is perverted. That is the tragic paradox of the drama, the metaphysical scandal which springs from the fact that the categories of God are not parallel or commensurate to those of man.

Act II centres on the Golden Calf. With Moses' long absence on Sinai, the Elders and the people have grown rebellious and afraid. The invisibility of God has become an intolerable anguish. Aaron yields to the voices that cry out for an image, for something that eye and hand can grasp in the act of worship. On the darkening stage the Golden Calf shines forth.

What follows seems to me one of the most astonishing pieces of music written in the 20th century. As musical analysts point out, it is a symphony in five movements with solo voices and choruses. The orchestration is so intricate yet dramatic in its statements and suggestions that it seems incredible that Schoenberg should have *heard* it all inside him, that he should have known exactly (if he did) how these fantastic instrumental and rhythmic combinations would work without, in fact, ever hearing a note played. The pageant of the Golden Calf makes the utmost demands on orchestras, singers, and dancers. Rearing horses, treasure-laden camels, and Four Naked Virgins are requirements which even the most resourceful of opera houses may find difficult to meet.

What Schoenberg had in mind is something very different from an ordinary operatic ballet. It is a total dramatic integration of voice, bodily motion, and orchestral development. Even the most frenzied moments of the idolatrous, sexual orgy are plotted in terms of a rigorous, immensely subtle musical structure. As Schoenberg wrote to Webern:

> I wanted to leave as little as possible to those new despots of the theatrical art, the producers, and even to envisage the choreography as far as I'm able to. . . . You know I'm not at all keen on the dance. . . . Anyway so far I've succeeded in thinking out movements such as at least enter into a different territory of expression from the caperings of common-or-garden ballet.

But these "caperings" are not wholly irrelevant. In Schoenberg's treatment of the

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Golden Calf, as in so much of *Moses and Aaron*, there is a revaluation—either straightforward or parodistic—of the conventions of opera. Are these conventions applicable to the modern circumstance? How much seriousness can they sustain? Thus the Golden Calf is both the logical culmination of, and a covert satire on, that catalogue of orgiastic ballets and ritual dances which is one of the distinctive traits of grand opera from Massenet's *Hérodiade* to *Tannhäuser*, from *Aïda* and *Samson et Dalila* to *Parsifal* and *Salome*. Schoenberg is fully aware of the dual quality of the scene. It is at the same time supremely serious and ironic in its exhaustive use of the convention:

> In the treatment of this scene, which actually represents the very core of my thought, I went pretty much to the limit, and this too is probably where my piece is most *operatic*; as indeed it must be.

With the return of Moses—his indistinct, terrifying figure looms suddenly on the horizon and is seen by one of the exhausted revellers—the drama moves swiftly to its climax. At a glance from Moses, the Golden Calf vanishes:

> *Begone, you that are the image of the fact that what is measureless cannot be bounded in an image.*

The two brothers confront each other on the empty stage. And once more it is Aaron who has the better of the argument. He has given the people an image so that Israel may live and not fall into despair. He loves the people and knows that the demands of abstraction and inwardness which Moses makes upon the human spirit are beyond the power of ordinary men. Moses loves an idea, an absolute vision, relentless in its purity. He would make of Israel the hollow, tormented vessel of an inconceivable presence. No people can endure such a task. Even the Tables of the Law which Moses has brought from the mountain are only an image, a palpable symbol of hidden authority.

Baffled, incensed by Aaron's argument, Moses smashes the Tables. Aaron accuses him of faintheartedness. The tribes of Israel shall continue their march to the Promised Land whether or not they have grasped the full meaning of God's revelation. As if to confirm his words, the Chorus resumes its march across the stage. It is led by a pillar of fire, and Aaron goes forth glorying in the visible wonder of God.

Moses is left alone. Is Aaron right? Must the inconceivable, unimaginable, unrepresentable reality of God diminish to mere symbol, to the tangible artifice of miracle? In that case all he has thought and said (the two are identical to Moses) has been madness. The very attempt to express his vision was a crime. The orchestra falls silent as the unison violins play a retrograde inversion of the basic twelve-tone set. Moses cries out, "O word, thou word that I lack!" and sinks to the ground, broken.

THIS IS ONE of the most moving, overwhelmingly dramatic moments in the history of opera and of the modern theatre. With its implicit allusion to the *Logos*, to the Word that is yet to come but which lies beyond speech, it gathers into one action both the claims of music to be the most complete idiom, the carrier of transcendent energies, and all that is felt in 20th-century art and philosophy about the gap between meaning and communication. It is almost the exact analogue to the close of the *Tractatus*: "Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent." But Moses' defeat also has a more specific, historical bearing, which may help us understand why Schoenberg did not complete the opera.

The letters of 1932 and 1933 show that he had every intention of doing so. As late as November 1948, Schoenberg could write: "I should really best like to finish *Die Jakobsleiter* and *Moses and Aaron*." What intervened?

There is evidence that Schoenberg found it difficult to give the third Act a coherent dramatic shape. He wrote to Walter Eidlitz on March 15th, 1933, that he had re-cast Aaron's Death for the fourth time "because of some almost incomprehensible contradictions in the Bible." As it stands, the text of Act III is a curious torso, both repetitive and moving. Once more, Moses and Aaron (now in chains) state their opposite conceptions of idea and image. But Moses no longer addresses his brother directly. He is speaking to the Jewish people as it prepares to enter into the mire and compromise of history. He prophesies that Jews will prosper only so long as they dwell in the stern wilderness of the spirit, in the presence of the One and Inconceivable God. If they forget their great act of renunciation and seek an ordinary haven in the world, they will have failed and their suffering shall be the greater. Salvation lies in apartness. The Jew is himself when he is a stranger.

Freed of his chains, Aaron falls dead at Moses' feet. (Is there here, one wonders, a reminiscence of Hunding's death when Wotan glances at him in scorn?) As we have no music to accompany the words, it is difficult to judge their effect. But the third Act is essentially static. There is no dramatic justification for Moses' triumph over a prostrate Aaron. Much is missing.

But the real impediment probably lay deeper. As Adorno remarks, *Moses and Aaron* was

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"a preventive action against the looming of Nazism." But even as Schoenberg worked on the score, Nazism was moving rapidly to its triumph. The words *Volk* and *Führer* figure prominently in the opera; they designate its supreme historical values, Israel and Moses. Now they were wrested out of Schoenberg's grasp by the million voices bawling them at Nuremberg. How could he continue to set them to music? As he laboured on the third Act in March 1933, Schoenberg must have known that the culture in which he had hammered out his vision of a new music, and for whose opera houses he had conceived *Moses and Aaron*, was heading for ruin or exile—as was his own personal life.

IT IS THIS WHICH GIVES the end of Act II its tremendous authority and logic. The events that were now to come to pass in Europe were, quite literally, beyond words, too inhuman for that defining act of humane consciousness which is speech. Moses' despairing cry, his collapse into silence, is a recognition—such as we find also in Kafka, in Broch, in Adamov—that words have failed us, that art can neither stem barbarism nor convey experience when experience grows unspeakable. Thus *Moses and Aaron* is, despite its formal incompletion, a work of marvellous finality. There was no more to be said.[3]

THE EXPERIENCE which awaits the audience at Covent Garden is no ordinary one. The wealth of the score and the dramatic tightness of the philosophic argument are such that it is impossible to see the opera as a whole, to grasp very much of its musical genius and originality at a first hearing. This is why it matters that the piece should enter into the repertoire, that it should become as current to a major opera house as is *Tristan*. Under present financial and technical conditions, modern works, particularly when they are too difficult to obtain an immediate box-office success, are put on a few times and then dropped. This is vandalism, and only the audience and the pressure of intelligent critical response can prevent it. But whether or not *Moses and Aaron* "succeeds" in London on June 28th, its place in the history of opera and of the philosophic imagination is assured. It is one of the great events of the modern spirit.

[3] This is why it seems to me that a spoken performance of the third Act, which Schoenberg himself envisioned and regarded as permissible, adds nothing and, in fact, weakens the uncanny force and beauty of the musical close.

The Waterfront and The Harbour

I give you the open sea to leave me for,
Its many ports and pleasure domes.

You give me a ship, prepared at any time to sail.

But the isles and esplanades of the high seas
Remain unvisited by us,

For we are the waterfront and the harbour.
We meet regardless of shore leave.

Hugo Williams

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Do you love your family?

Then as a family man you have, of course, made your will, appointed an efficient executor to administer your estate – and satisfied yourself that he will be able to handle your affairs properly when necessary. You haven't? Then, sir, it is time you did. For the future well-being and security of your dependants are your responsibility – and you will never know what may happen to them if anything happens to you.

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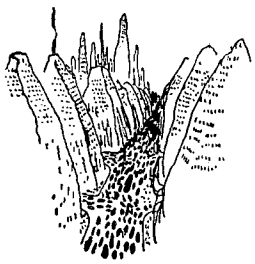
NOTES & TOPICS

Letter from New York

American After-thoughts



NO-ONE imagines that what Elizabeth Hardwick calls "the weird chaos of American life" can ever be summarised, nor its endless contradictions and paradoxes resolved. Nothing so grandiose: the problem is to define some excitement and tension of the place, its curious mixture of anxiety and over-confidence, violence and apathy, glimmer and filth. Clearly, whatever it is you are looking for you can find. And the foreigner, his view coloured and shifted by those three thousand miles of ocean, is looking for something that probably doesn't much concern the Americans themselves. You come to the States, as Lawrence said, to get away. Travel may or may not broaden the mind, it certainly unbinds the fantasies. So part of your reactions are qualified by that sudden access of emotional freedom that comes when you simply clear out.

With partiality, then, and a great deal of projection, I find the seductiveness of the States in its combination of these ambiguous virtues: loneliness, energy and independence.

Loneliness: It is a continual, almost palpable quality which the country gives off like a heat shimmer. It is no less present in the utter separateness and indifference of city life, the blank size of the buildings, the self-sufficiency of the different ethnic ghettoes, than in the deserts and mountains of the South-west. It is not made less for an instant by that terrible friendliness, mass produced, pre-packaged, frozen, that coos at you from every T.V. screen and billboard. Rather, this false coziness—instant Doris Day—accentuates the loneliness precisely because it is mass produced, a convention as chilling and formal as diplomatic protocol. Perhaps it is this style of friendliness without human sympathy that helps to make the Americans so wary of any organised welfare: in a certain light—that, perhaps, cast by a million television screens—social benevolence looks much like contempt.

Energy: This, too, is part of the physical presence of the country, an aspect of its power, wealth, and drive to excel. When Robert Lowell calls American society "sheer" and Norman Mailer calls it "totalitarian" both are referring to those monster organisations that seem to control, though often in a benign, soft-selling way, so much of the American life. Yet they were also referring to something more subtle and pervasive, something that has perhaps more to do with the probing, dramatic architecture by which the Corporations create one aspect of their public image. It is the same quality as appears in the passionate self-absorption of private life, the unwavering drive to do what you must flat out. There is a continual, impatient nerviness about people, which has less to do with passion than exacerbation. It is at one with that sense of violence which, as Norman Podhoretz says, "trembles so constantly and ubiquitously below the surface of the life we lead." It's also at one with the continual tension of intelligence which controls the tone of the best American arts, an unrelaxing energy of the imagination and intellect. This may at times seem battering, bull-headed and, to the arts, paradoxically insensitive—Lowell calls it "a monotony of the sublime"—but it strikes me as preferable to the Englishman's habitually wan caution and cult of the amateur.

Independence: In a way, this is a combination of the controlling loneliness and energy of American life, which in turn have a cause-and-effect relationship: the energy is released because people essentially leave each other alone to get on with their own isolated lives; there is great envy, greater competitiveness but peculiarly little interference. American life seems run by a principle of psychic segregation, though not so much separate and equal as separate and driven. This touches some nerve in the American tradition of independence which began with the Declaration and is embodied in the whole concept of democratic equality, and in the doctrines of individual grace, salvation, revelation. It is present more potently still in the non-idealist thrust of successive generations of immigrants, seeking the worldly salvation of a successful new life in a successful new country. And this, as Murray Kempton suggested, means "parricide," the utter obliteration of all background and tradition. Tradition, it is implied, begins now and with us.

In the arts, Harold Rosenberg has called this "the tradition of the new"; another title would be the tradition of traditionlessness. Nothing can be assured; each newcomer of power and ambition feels he has to re-invent his art for himself from scratch, endowing it with his own forms, conventions, language and metaphysics. It is fundamentally a matter of inventing himself, endowing himself with an identity; it also

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involves, in one degree or another, re-inventing his own society.

THIS BRAND OF CARE and attention for the inner life is a luxury product, a result of the material ease and relative wealth of the American intelligentsia. In a country like Poland you can more or less ignore your private troubles because the environment itself is so drably and inescapably in need. In the States, on the other hand, all that comfort exaggerates the personal unease, making it seem gratuitous, intolerable. To the outsider the well-fed, well-paid, endowed and indulged lives of the American intellectuals make their obsessive "alienation" seem merely a hallucination. Yet, since these are serious men, the concept obviously has some existential reality; it describes sharply enough how they feel towards their environment. It also, as I have suggested, describes a social, almost geographic condition which was there before any fashionable existential theory.

The tradition of traditionlessness lays American artists open to the constant pressure of inner mobility and psychological improvisation, parallel to the constantly shifting, improvised patterns of American society itself. And it is this need continually to play their lives out by ear that makes their work so vital, their influence so central. Nowadays the European intelligentsia turns to the United States in the same way as, for a long period, they once turned to France: not just for the stimulus of an exploding culture —new ideas, new styles, new fashions—but because they sense under all that turmoil and chic the stirrings of a genuinely advanced sensibility. American artists, that is, seem involved in exploring and defining areas of experience which have not previously been expressed in the arts. Which is, perhaps, no more than a high-pitched way of saying that something new and rather marvellous is happening there.

THIS ADVANCE has been pasted over, like some battered old suitcase, with any number of labels. But the most misleading of them was "classicism." Compared with the entranced '90s and tweedy Georgians, T. E. Hulme's theories and T. S. Eliot's practice may have seemed classical enough in their restraint and intelligence. But in every other way the modern arts are simply a fresh extension of the Romantic movement, the original impulse of which had faded away in moods, atmospherics and generalities. Romanticism in its beginnings had been in the party of revolution, progress and independence, an offshoot of radical politics, a revolt against the assured Augustan pieties of good sense, order and the deliberate limitation of feelings and language. In place of that the Romantics put the single feeling man in all his oddness and spontaneity.

But by the beginning of the first World War, Romantic Man, like Augustan Man, had vanished again into the mists of conventionalised high feeling. The modern movement was an attempt to restore him in the light of new realities. First among these was the science of the inner life. Freud once said that "the poets and philosophers before me discovered the unconscious. What I discovered was the scientific method by which the unconscious can be studied." From this Lionel Trilling concluded that "psycho-analysis is one of the culminations of the Romanticist literature of the nineteenth century." The hero of modern literature, grandchild of the nineteenth century, is Romantic Man in psycho-analysis.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN classicism and romanticism is one of province, a difference between the inner and outer worlds. But the difference between the romantic and the modern is one of attitude, method and awareness. The modern is committed not simply to feeling but to thinking about feeling; his attitude is tense, analytic, probing, skilful, dissatisfied. He is concerned not simply with his responses but with the sources of those responses; he is concerned with motives, as in some continually unrolling drama of the self, a drama with no plot, an infinity of reasons, and only one character.

The movement of the modern arts has been to press deeper and deeper into the subterranean world of psychic isolation, to live out in the arts the personal extremism of breakdown, paranoia and depression. Lawrence once wrote, "One sheds one's sickness in books—repeats and presents one's emotions to be master of them." This is no longer quite true. The modern artist seems more often to *create* his sickness in his work, giving himself over to it for the sake of the range and intensity of his art. He cultivates not his own garden but his psychosis, or at the very least his psychopathic tendencies.

All this has an odd side effect: the complete internalisation of all phenomena. Where the Romantics made nature the object of their radical aesthetic politics and the freedom to respond—to the nightingale, skylark, daffodils and the rest—seem like a revolutionary principle, the moderns seem utterly unaware of the world outside. They live in and on internal landscapes which they may or may not project on to the outer world as seems convenient. As geographers of the underworld and historians of the inner migrations they are always meticulous and preoccupied, often passionate, imaginative, even brave. They have endowed that tangled, badly-lit country with a separate and curiously

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objective life of its own. But in the poetry of, say, Robert Lowell or Sylvia Plath this extraordinary self-awareness is delicately counterbalanced by an utter indifference; the outer world only seems to exist in as much as it can be assimilated. Even an Englishman like Ted Hughes, who starts out as a nature poet and whose work contains more animals than the London Zoo, lavishes all that loving, sharp detail on his menagerie only for whatever corresponding sense of unpredictable violence he finds in himself. He writes like a nature poet gone blind; and he is typical.

THE REASON FOR ALL THIS is one of the great clichés of our time: the artist is thrown increasingly "in on himself" by the sheer size and engulfing blankness of "industrial society"; as life becomes more mass-produced, mass-organised and statistical the arts become proportionately, despairingly, more extreme and solipsistic. To this is added the second great cliché: the "crisis" situation—the inheritance of the concentration camps and the threat of a nuclear holocaust—is reflected in the personal extremism of the artists, as though, like diplomats, they had to tread with ever-increasing wariness in the knowledge of total disaster—a knowledge which they have obtained by an endless series of underground tests on themselves. No doubt all this is true. But the fact that it is the Americans rather than the Europeans or Russians who have responded to this situation with such artistic alacrity is due, I think, to their peculiar genius for loneliness, which creates these conditions even despite the environment.

THE MARXISTS invoke extremism and "negative" art as evidence of the decline of capitalist society. But the opposite is equally true: because society as a whole is so flourishing, powerful, and rich, the artists, in their role of outsiders, feel that they must pay the price of the collective success. It is as though they regarded society's existential failings not just as their responsibility but as their own personal guilt. If their anxiety is unprecedented in its ubiquity and intensity, that is because they are unable to find scapegoats for it outside their own selves. Hence their positive obligation to make the worst of a good thing. The fact that, like most other citizens, they are well-fed, well-clothed, well-housed, well-paid, increases their inner sense of trouble. Even to live in a political system that works becomes frustrating: you can vote, help change the party in power and yet not make a jot of difference to the benevolent anonymity of society itself, which goes on proliferating like a cancer at the expense of the live cells. So even the liberal-humanist position—part of that powerful Jewish influence on American life—seems to be undergoing some crisis of nerves. Each new issue—particularly each promising one—is so swiftly, sophisticatedly and sceptically criticised that there is never even a momentary resting-place for optimism. Of course, the destruction is brilliant, witty, stimulating, tart; but it is so only for the sake of brilliance, wit, stimulation, tartness. Attack for the sake of attack is an automatic response, another product perhaps of the isolation and restless drive. So in a curious way, intellectual energy becomes a means of promoting hopelessness.

LIBERAL HUMANISM was, I suppose, a hand-down from the 'thirties, and an attempt to carry over into cultural affairs enlightened left-wing principles in a non-political form. As such, it suffered the same fate as Adlai Stevenson (and did so, perhaps, because of Stevenson's fate): defeat, decline, and then official establishment in a grandiose but essentially unimportant position in the hierarchy of power. Just as Kennedy, compared with Stevenson, represented a political attitude which was at once more stirring, tough-minded, adroit, and less tenderly principled, so too in the arts: the attitude is now more ruthless, nihilistic, and egocentric than anything foreseen by the liberal tradition. Lionel Trilling may have hit on the difference in the titles of his books; *The Liberal Imagination* gave way to *The Opposing Self*.

But when artists begin to internalise everything—nature and society, art and life, intimacy and response—they have to face a simple but overbearing difficulty: beyond a certain point, the self is also boring. Which is perhaps only another way of saying that the self contains a great deal of destructiveness which it turns as equally against itself as against the outer world. The result is a bored moral nihilism which makes artists of all kinds expend immense intellectual and creative energy on the effort to cut away the ground from under their own feet. Extremism in the arts—the cultivation of breakdown and all the diverse facts of schizophrenia—ends not so much in anarchy as in a kind of internal fascism in which the artist, to relieve his own boredom, becomes both torturer and tortured. This may in no way affect his political enlightenment or general liberal stance. It is simply a question of his attitude to himself and his work: ruthless, destructive, deeply self-involved, wildly self-gratifying. Even the cult of the Absurd, for example, is simply a charming and objective way of re-phrasing this internal nihilism: you acknowledge the sureness with which universal darkness buries all, the inevitability of the descent into blank chaos, and then you make a joke about it all—which is in itself the final nihilism, since it destroys even the force of your understanding of destruc-

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tion. Lord Snow picked the wrong example when he ticked off the arts men for not understanding the Second Law of Thermodynamics. The whole of modern art centres on it: it is concerned, that is, with the principle of psychic entropy, by which the artist's whole world tends continually to run down towards disorder and disintegration. Thus a work of art, like a law of physics, becomes an attempt to halt the dissolution by a clear, ordered, but temporary system of insights. Uncertainty has always been a stimulus: now it is also an artistic principle.

In the context of general American *bonhomie*, togetherness, and wealthy self-satisfaction, the intense anxiety of the artist is healthy and necessary. But the immediate context in which art is made is that of the creator himself, and maybe a few friends. And there the nihilism is much harder to handle, the isolation harder to accept. Perhaps the continually dissatisfied creative drive towards new forms, new systems, new insights is simply an attempt to find some means of making tolerable those two opposing pressures: the mass pressure of the collective unity of material power, and the lonely pressure of energy turned in and pressing down in utter isolation. *A. Alvarez*

Letter from Vienna

The End of Socialist Realism?

"It was Pasternak himself who told me this. One night during the purges, his phone rang. It was Stalin. 'Boris Leonidovich, do you know a poet called Mandelstam?' he asked. 'Of course I know him!' Pasternak replied. 'Any good?'—'One of the very best!'—'Pity!' said Stalin, as he put down the receiver...."

The speaker was one of Eastern Europe's most prominent theatre men. The place—Vienna, at the end of last March. The Austrian Society for Literature, always conscious of its Austrian duty to act as a "European bridge" between East and West, had invited twenty-five European directors, critics, and playwrights to discuss the contemporary theatre East and West of what is still called the Iron Curtain. I confess that I had accepted the invitation more because of a nostalgia for whipped cream and authentic goulash than because I had expected any fruitful results from yet another public discussion. The experience of the Drama Conference at Edinburgh had been dispiriting. It had been very difficult to get even within a mile of a discussion with the Eastern bloc representatives then: they had immediately entrenched themselves behind a smokescreen of sentimental clichés about "the sacredness of art" and "the artist's duty to serve humanity." Why should there be a basis for more useful dialogue less than two years later?

Well, I must admit that I was wrong. The meeting with a selection of prominent theatre people from Poland (Erwin Axer, director of the Contemporary Theatre; Jan Kott, the scholar and Shakespeare critic; Adam Tarn, editor of *Dialog*, Europe's best drama magazine; and Slavomir Mrozek, the playwright), Czechoslovakia (O. Krejca and Jan Grossman, two of Europe's most daring experimental directors), Hungary (Gyula Hay, the playwright), Bulgaria (Grisha Ostrovsky, director of the Theatre of Satire), and Rumania (Liviu Ciulei, director and stage designer) was not only exhilarating on a purely personal level, but also a revelation about the changing state of affairs in Eastern Europe to-day.

There was only one disappointment: the two Russian representatives, who had accepted the Austrian invitation and had announced their imminent arrival, simply did not turn up. Friends who had been in touch with them only days before their scheduled departure could not understand the reason why Nikolai Okhlopkov, the director, and Georgi Tovstonogov, the leader of the Leningrad theatre, should not have come; they had talked of the trip with eager anticipation. No explanation was forthcoming from the Russian Embassy in Vienna which had been actively concerned in the arrangements.

Apart from this slight blot on the programme, however, the main impression was one of almost complete harmony between Eastern and Western representatives. If anything, the Eastern contingent seemed *more avant-garde*, *more* radical in its artistic liberalism, *more* "with it" than the West Europeans—and as well (if not better) informed on all the latest trends and fashions here and there. And they talked quite freely, without inhibitions of any kind—both in private and in public.

The organisers of the conference had prepared a number of questions, clearly designed to start off the usual debates—questions about the theatre's ability to "change the world," about the role of "realism," about the conflict between the Epic Theatre and the Absurd. Yet no familiar East-West discussion developed. The Eastern representatives steadfastly declined to defend the political function of the theatre, the value of socialist realism, or to oppose the introspective pessimistic work of playwrights like Beckett and Ionesco. Quite the contrary: the Rumanian representative, for example, made a spirited bid to claim Ionesco as a great Rumanian national asset! The Czech director,

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Jan Grossman, spoke eloquently on the fallacy of the theatre of Stalinist times when political subject-matter was insisted on, but the treatment was so shallow that no one could take the plays concerned seriously enough for them to have a political impact of any kind. And Otomar Krejca, the other Czech, earnestly discussed the pitiable error of political leaders who were tempted into believing that they could control the input-and-output of artists in the same way as in light and heavy industry. As to "realism"—who had ever doubted that the nightmares of Ionesco, the dark broodings of Beckett were not every whit as real ("a thousand times *more* real") than any play about tractor drivers and collective farmers? When challenged about the doctrine of "socialist realism," not one of the East Europeans deigned to take the question at all seriously. "There is realism—and realism!" That was as far as one could get. Mostly there was little beyond a pitying smile that implied: "Now, come, come, you are not going to tell me that you in the West took *that* seriously as an artistic, as an aesthetic doctrine!"

THE MORE ONE PROBED, the more carefully one searched for any evidence of any support for "socialist realism" the more clear it became that not only was it no longer a factor to be reckoned with in Eastern European theatre, but that, in fact, it had never really existed. Of course, one had paid lip-service to it under the pressure of brute force. But the very fact that brute force had been needed to impose it had ruled it out of court as an aesthetic doctrine worthy of the slightest notice.

It must be stressed: the Russians were absent. Perhaps there are among them still some respectable practitioners of drama who are true believers. Some might also still be found in East Germany, whose Communists have no nationalist feeling to fall back on and must therefore slavishly cling to the ideological security provided by blind party loyalty. But in the rest of Eastern and South Eastern Europe—that was, for me, the exhilarating outcome of the Vienna meeting—the ideological blight which, after all, lasted till 1956 in Poland and much longer in some of the other countries, has left no permanent trace. "Socialist realism" seems to have simply dissolved into thin air, as though it never had existed; and it really never existed, if it failed to command any measure of genuine acceptance.

At one of the receptions organised by our Austrian hosts I was talking to the *dramaturg* of one of the Viennese theatres about an interesting Soviet play that he was thinking of putting on and that we had produced on radio in England. One of the East European journalists (the Austrians had invited a strong contingent of reporters from Eastern Europe as well as prominent theatre personalities) who overheard our conversation suddenly chimed in: "What? You are doing *Russian* plays! *We* don't do Russian plays any more. They are just too bad. All of them. Really terrible!" Strange indeed are the dialectics of history....

In fact, so uncanny was the evident non-existence of a socialist-realist ideological basis among the East European representatives at these discussions that members of the invited audience began to question the credentials of those concerned. As one of them put it: "There has been no East-West discussion here—because it seems only the West has been invited from the East!" In other words: only the most avant-gardist East European theatre people had come to Vienna. This, of course, was true. But then—the invitations had been issued merely on the ground of the artistic reputation and international renown of the individuals involved; there could be no doubt that they were the most prominent men available. Now, if the best artists, the most respected critics, the men who run the best-endowed theatres, happen to be also the most experimental and advanced, surely that can be no coincidence in countries whose policies in these fields are not generally left to accident. For the moment at least these representatives *were* the official spokesmen of their countries.

INEVITABLY, THE QUESTION AROSE—and was much discussed outside the public sessions—how permanent was this radical liberalisation of the artistic scene? It would be unfair and inaccurate to suggest that a number of those most closely concerned did not voice apprehensions and forebodings. But on the whole they all agreed that such a process of liberalisation was, in its very nature, "almost certainly" an irreversible movement. A public that might have been induced to believe a set of falsehoods once, simply could not be asked to believe in them again. The lies had been officially unmasked; the personality cult had been denounced. Now people had become very alert to symptoms of the back-lash. There might be "minor fluctuations," "ups and downs." But the main trend could no longer be turned back. Dictatorships seemed to be becoming even more sensitive to public opinion than democracies.

Let us hope that those who reasoned thus will be proved right. One trusts that there will be no more tragic victims of the doctrine of socialist realism—like poor Ossip Mandelstam, who really was one of the greatest Russian poets of the day (as Pasternak tried to suggest to Stalin, too late).

Martin Esslin

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India & Her Friends

By John Mander

"THE DISEASE from which the Kuomintang collapsed has already infected Congress. It is a far cry from the one-time chaos of Nanking to the present-day splendours of New Delhi. But the alarm has begun to sound."

And nowhere more stridently than in Ronald Segal's new book.[1] For Mr. Segal's thesis is a blood-curdling one: that India—once the hope of the West, the Light of Asia, "the world's largest democracy"—stands in reality where China stood a generation ago. India's Congress is China's Kuomintang; Nanking is New Delhi. And the implication is plain: if Congress India is to avoid the fate of Kuomintang China, she must reform herself radically—or the alternative will be you-know-what. Mr. Segal is perhaps inclined to exaggerate China's "socialist achievements" for the purposes of his contrast. But he is plainly right that if international politics are some kind of economic Olympiad, China has indeed taken "giant strides" since her Revolution, and left democratic India "on the track." And not only on the economic track. Once upon a time, the loser could expect a little sporting sympathy. But not now, not in this cold, ruthless—Mr. Segal has a respect for ruthlessness—realistic world of nuclear bombs and growth rates and population curves! If India fails, she goes down. History may say "alas," but—in Auden's words—"cannot help or pardon." Mr. Segal, I should make it clear, does not welcome the prospect of India's defeat. As a democratic socialist, he merely sheds a few anticipatory—and perhaps admonitory—tears. Personally, I think Mr. Segal mourns prematurely. But his grief is genuine; these are not crocodile tears, they are for real.

Since my quarrel is rather with his basic thesis, and the attitudes that underlie it, let me say at once that much in Ronald Segal's book deserves high praise. To have got so much into so short a book is an achievement. To the outsider, India has always seemed alarmingly over-populated—if not physically, then with gods and goddesses, godlings and heroes and spirits, *swamis* and *yogis* and *gurus*. As in her religion, so in history, India seems often disorderly, paradoxical, shapeless. For the generalising mind, India is a notorious quicksand. We all know of India's famous tradition of tolerance: during the Independence struggle nothing attracted the admiration of Western men of good will more than Gandhi's generous syncretism and Nehru's humanistic loathing of the fanatic. Yet in the end the product was over-sold. What was true of these two great men was never true of India in general: no culture was ever so fanatically colour-sensitive, so racially exclusive, so inhumanly rigid in its social stratification as India was—and, as Mr. Segal explains, still largely is. Indeed, a side-effect of India's experiment in democracy is that the bonds of caste may actually have tightened. Africans are frankly told by their Afro-Asian brothers that they can go back where they belong—into the trees. Fair girls are marriageable; dusky girls get left on the shelf. And these are not aberrations such as an Act of Parliament could cure. They are rooted, far more deeply than the equivalent prejudices in the West, in that almost impenetrable, three-thousand-year-old thicket of Hindu tradition that Mr. Segal rather bravely assaults—and *which is India*, like it or not. Much of the "disillusion with India" that has come over the West—and especially the Western Left—since India has been free, can be put down to the fact that these things were never explained, indeed were happily ignored by rationalist-minded "progressives," to whom that side of India was, as Forster has it, "boom." Mr. Segal's book is perhaps a shade too long on history. He devotes a quarter of his text to India before the coming of the British; and while he is interesting on the Harappa civilisation, and its possible influence

[1] *The Crisis of India*. By RONALD SEGAL. Jonathan Cape, 42s., and Penguin Special, 5s.

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on Aryan India, the debate seems a shade academic when "India's crisis" is on the agenda. Still, it is good to have these things explained; and Mr. Segal certainly cannot be accused of ignoring, like earlier "progressive" writers, the "cultural context" in which Indian politics operate—why, he even explains those gods and goddesses we always found so baffling!

So far, then, so good. There is no short book I know of that contains so much information, so deftly digested, about Indian religion, history, society, constitutional structure. Especially admirable, I think, is Mr. Segal's attempt to unravel the complexities of the caste system. Indeed it is the problematical things, from which Western writers often shy away, at which Mr. Segal is particularly good: he dodges nothing, and has obviously—though he does not, of course, claim originality for most of the background analysis in the book—done an immense amount of homework. He is an assiduous boner-up on complex subjects; and if Messrs. Penguin and Cape wanted a general, factual guide to modern India —a book that was badly needed—they have done very well with Mr. Segal. Yet it is just the sober air of factuality pervading the greater part of the book—the quote at the head of this article is from Mr. Segal's peroration—that could seriously mislead. And, since his book is likely to be widely read, this is of some importance. For *The Crisis of India* is very much a *livre a thèse*. It is only when one has seized on this point—it is not evident until fairly late on—that the use to which the factual matter is put becomes clearer—and more questionable. In retrospect, Mr. Segal's inclusion of so much social and historical "background material" appears in a rather different light.

For *The Crisis of India*, I believe, is the end product of a specific disillusionment. The suddenness with which Independent India vanished from the area of British left-wing concern, after all, is rather astonishing. Kingsley Martin's *New Statesman* has been criticised for many of its policies—on Munich, or on the Moscow Trials. But the most striking political characteristic of the intellectual Left of the 'thirties—as reflected in the *New Statesman*—was not so much that it was wrong-headed as that it was so largely ineffectual. It said many silly things; but it did not really matter what it said. But on India —and India was the anti-Colonial issue *par excellence*, once Ireland's hash had been settled—the intellectual Left chipped away at the British Imperial resolve (as Orwell pointed out) with devastating effect. No doubt a political review can seldom hope to influence political decisions directly; indeed, I doubt if any has ever done so. But it can certainly create, over a long period, a climate of opinion. And this, surely, is what the *Observer* did for Africa during the 'fifties, and the *New Statesman* for India between the wars. About the Moscow Trials, about Munich, Orwell and later critics of Kingsley Martin may be right: but they cannot take from him the credit for having persuaded—more, I think, than any other single man—educated opinion of the *moral* necessity of Imperial abdication. This is certainly not forgotten in India; when Mr. Wilson appointed as British High Commissioner Mr. Kingsley Martin's successor as Editor of the *New Statesman* he paid a handsome, and well-appreciated, tribute to that remarkable special relationship.

Still, for most people, that is all ancient history now. One has only to look at the space our major newspapers devote to Indian affairs, or at the books published since Independence, to realise how completely India has dropped out of sight and mind. On the rare occasions when India is news it is because of her bickering with the Nagas or the Pakistanis; it is thanks to a new government scandal, a communal disturbance, or a language riot. Of course, there is an element of *schadenfreude* at work: Goa was a fine opportunity to hit back at the uncontrollable sanctimoniousness of Nehru's India. But the failure to report seriously on India's economic and political problems—surely of greater moment to Britain than, say, the doings of Alice Lenshina—requires explanation. It is not just that Africa took India's place in the affections of the British Left after 1947—though that is part of the story. It is certainly not due to lack of British business interest in India: there are said to be more Britons at work in India today than in the time of the Raj, and British investment is still *four times* that of the United States. And this is to discount the innumerable invisible ties —through universities, the law, military tradition, the enduring British cultural ambience—that still exist between Britain and India. (In many fields they are being rapidly eroded by the growth of U.S. influence—to the regret of many educated Indians.) The difference between these deep and intimate ties, and those that remain between Britain and Africa, is surely not of degree but of kind. Now that most of British Africa has secured its independence, can we not be frank about this? However corrupt Congress may be in certain respects, there is no doubt —and Mr. Segal confirms this—that in India democracy *works*. *Works* not only in the sense that Indians vote, in huge numbers and in secret, but that they vote *for* something—that their preferences reflect significant movements of opinion and are effective in influencing the policies of the governing party. Of how many

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African Commonwealth countries can the same be said? The truth is: in India, British democracy has "taken," in Africa it has not. Considering India's size, her backwardness and complexity, ought not this to represent, for the concerned democrat, one of the most staggering and heartening political success stories in the post-war world?

IT IS NO DOUBT significant that Mr. Segal (who claims to "approach India with an African neutrality") prefers to make China his standard of comparison rather than Africa. When he refers to Africa, it is either to upbraid India for her lack of anti-colonialist zeal (over Algeria, say, where her attitude is compared unfavourably with that of China), or to blame Indians for their vicious colour prejudice. Though he acknowledges India's unique success in making democracy work in an "underdeveloped" country, he implies that the final standard by which her democracy must be judged is economic success. He shows, without difficulty, that India's rate of growth—in steel, in cement, in fuel and electricity—has not kept pace with China's. If these trends continue, he implies, India's democracy will be judged, by the world and by her own people, to have been a failure. China's system will have been proved superior, and a cry will go up for its adoption in India. And, if Mr. Segal does not give this outcome his prospective blessing, he does imply that it is only economic criteria that matter in the long run —that a régime's economic success does confer on it a kind of moral superiority. Now, in my view, there is little arguing with this position. I know of no way in which the fruits of democracy—free speech, a free press, and the like—can be balanced against the fruits of economic progress. One might, of course, look more closely at some of Mr. Segal's statistics. One might suggest that, if India's five-year plans have done little more than enable her, by running, to stand in the same place, at least she has not committed the monumental folly of a "Great Leap Forward"—and, what is more, *could* not have committed it, just because she happens to be a democratic country. There are also what are known as the imponderables: India has had no labour camps, no brain-washing, no compulsory collectivisation.

MR. SEGAL'S REPLY to this is very much like that of some British apologists—shades of Kingsley Martin!—for Stalin in the 'thirties. Is the—regrettable—social violence of the Communist state really greater than the sum of the social violence inherent in India's caste system, the domination of her peasantry by money-lenders and landlords, the whole oppressive weight of

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a culture that stifles and distorts human development? Obviously it would be wrong to dismiss this as mere sophistry: the suffering caused by India's present social organisation is too real and too poignant. But the argument contains, like that of Stalin's apologists, an obvious fallacy: the criterion by which he proposes to judge India is one that the author would not dream of applying to his own country—for by elevating, say, steel production statistics into normative morality he brackets out the very values in which he himself believes. Mr. Segal, after all, would hardly accept that South Africa's economic progress justified the practice of *apartheid*. Yet South Africa would surely be a gold medallist in any post-war economic Olympiad.

I am not, of course, saying that Mr. Segal consciously *desires* a Communist solution to India's problems. I take it his intention is rather to frighten us into responding to the gravity of India's problems with a grim "this is going to happen, unless...." But in doing so—and this is surely the real criticism, say, of the Sidney Webb-Kingsley Martin position in the 'thirties—he seems far too willing to accept, not only the statistics, but the criteria offered by Communist apologists. I can quite see, and even respect, Mr. Segal's intentions in setting up Communist China as a bogeyman. What I object to is the intellectual surrender that is involved in accepting as normative, however tacitly, assumptions which ignore the values of the free society in which I, and presumably Mr. Segal, believe.

THIS, THEN, is my real quarrel with Mr. Segal's book: that he has allowed his bogeyman to take control and dictate the terms of reference. But he is unfair to India in more ways than one. Indeed, I think he often falls into a trap that was set for the intellectuals of the 'thirties. Because India is an open society, it is easily verifiable, let us say, that her government does not send people to labour camps. In other words, the openness of India's society ought to work in her favour. Yet, in fact, it is often the other way round. Her very openness invites inspection (and why not?) of her many weaknesses and anomalies—while China's bamboo curtain makes it hard to get at the most elementary facts. But of this arrangement Mao's China, like Stalin's Soviet Union, is in fact the beneficiary. A table of statistics is enough to establish China's superiority; no further questions will be asked—because we all know that they cannot be answered. It is this we have to bear in mind when we read Mr. Segal's diatribes against corruption in high places in India: the assumption that there is not corruption of a different, but perhaps far more frightening kind "on the other side of the hill," is not one that he examines. Perhaps it would have been relevant to compare the degree of corruption in Indian politics with that, say, in Nigeria—another open society with a British colonial background. Or for that matter with Brazil, whose problems are in many ways similar to India's. Whether the comparison would come out to India's discredit I very much doubt.

Of course, it is equally true that since India is proud to call herself an open society she has to take the consequences. And no one can deny that the appalling extent of public corruption, the general decay of standards since Independence, are ill omens for the future. But even here I think Mr. Segal goes too far. He is particularly down on the business community, pointing to the blatant bribery of public officials that it countenances, and to the princely donations it makes to the funds of certain political parties. Or he demonstrates the extent to which Congress has fallen away from its "earlier idealism" in putting up candidates on a caste or religious basis. A Moslem is found for a Moslem constituency, a Sikh for a Sikh; Congress cabinets are carefully weighted so that each caste shall have its cut. Now this is all true; but does it represent quite the lapse from idealism Mr. Segal implies? Is not this in large part what must happen in any such society once the machinery of democracy is permitted to function? Thus it is true that democracy has had the unexpected effect of giving the caste system a new lease of life. But it is also true that it has given the lower castes—and minority groups like Moslems or Sikhs or Christians—a power to manœuvre they did not possess before. When Congress puts up a Moslem or a Sikh, hoping to cash in on this new mobility, it is simply doing what the Democratic Party in the United States does when it puts up an Irishman or a Negro or a Puerto Rican. American politics, at the lower levels, has in fact had a "communalist" basis not altogether unlike India's (though very unlike Britain's). No doubt that is regrettable. But one can see how mass democracy makes it inevitable; and one can also see that it has a good side as well as a bad. Again, in American politics the contributions of the business community play an important role. So they do in Britain. Indeed, it would be difficult to think of a major democracy where they do not. Mr. Segal sharply condemns the corrupting interaction of government and business in India, and the demoralisation it has led to in a supposedly "socialist" state. Again, he is right. But he himself points out the alarming extent to which businessmen are dependent on government in India. He blames them for their egotistical capitalistic ways—but he could have

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added that Indian businessmen might have been less "corrupt," if they had been allowed to indulge their capitalistic instincts more straightforwardly. Again, one cannot avoid the suspicion that if Mr. Segal is offended by much in the politics of independent India, it is either because he has not thought through the consequences of mass democracy for that kind of society, or because sub-consciously he does not really like mass democracy very much.

THE CORRUPTION THEME is important to Mr. Segal for another reason: it provides the link between Congress and the Kuomintang. The Kuomintang began as a national revolutionary movement; it ended as a corrupt clique of warlords and profiteers, hopelessly alienated from the Chinese masses. A similar alienation Mr. Segal sees growing up in India—will the result, perhaps, be the same? But the analogy, I think, is not really very close. The point about the Kuomintang, as Mr. Segal says, is that in the end it represented little but itself, that it had no roots in the life of the nation. But, on his own showing, this is hardly true of the Congress party. The involvement of Congress in the nation's life at all levels is intimate and all-embracing—that, in a sense, is what Mr. Segal complains about when he speaks of its "corruption." As he points out, Congress has held its vote at three successive general elections since Independence. He rightly maintains that the talk of a military take-over at the time of the Sino-Indian conflict was hysterical. By all the usual criteria, in other words, Congress should be reckoned one of the more stable political structures in the world to-day: it has great traditions, great wealth, great experience, and it embodies the national will as do few political parties in any country. Yet Mr. Segal can make the comparison with China with startling naïvety:

> It does not, of course, follow that India should adopt a Chinese political system or imitate every gesture of China's economic programme. The development of modern China has not, even by sympathetic accounts, been without its blunders and unnecessary cruelties. But despite the claims of China's committed assailants, it is difficult to believe that the country's economic development during the last fourteen years could have been accomplished in the absence of massive popular enthusiasm, let alone in the presence of massive popular hostility. No number of Five-Year Plans can achieve fundamental change in India without the recruitment of voluntary popular effort....

As an account of Mao's China this convinces as little as Mr. Segal's account of Congress India (Ah, those little necessary cruelties!). Of course, many of Mr. Segal's criticisms of Congress are justified; but I suggest that the whole analogy with the Kuomintang is misleading. The nemesis Mr. Segal has in store for us will not occur: Congress is not likely to go the way of the Kuomintang, nor will the never-very-impressive, and now hopelessly-split CPI go the way of Mao Tse-tung. I can see why Mr. Segal chose to start the Chinese hare; but I am afraid it just will not run.

CHINA REMAINS, of course, as a military threat. But here, too, Mr. Segal exaggerates Chinese power and displays remarkably little faith in India's ability to resist. Consider, for example, the following argument:

> It may be reasonably argued that India should spend not more on defence at the moment but less, since the country is not able to defend itself effectively against China and will be unable to do so for some time to come; either China intends to conquer India, in which case the raising of expenditure on defence to eight per cent or even more will make no difference in the short run, or China does not, in which case India will be assuming a gratuitous and, in its present condition, dangerous economic burden by sacrificing planned development to defence....

Now this argument, if it means anything, must surely mean that all defence is a waste of time. (Either Hitler intends to conquer us, in which case he will do so, whatever we spend; or he doesn't, in which case why spend anything at all?) It is an argument rather reminiscent of Bertrand Russell's egregious *Unarmed Victory*. And one sees where the obsession with China is likely to lead; the nation that thinks this way will be stared into submission long before the fighting starts. Yet, in point of fact, the alarm is unjustified. China won the first round in the border conflict, certainly: but to say that the Indian army was "routed" is overdoing it. After all, the Chinese broke off the fighting at precisely the point where their superiority—in knowledge of the terrain and irregular tactics—was likely to decline, and that of the Indian army—trained to fight more conventionally and with proper logistical support—was likely to increase. A full-scale invasion of India was never really on the cards, even had Russia and the West stood aside. In fact, they would *not* have stood aside, and the assistance they would have provided to India would quickly have proved a match for China, with her ageing weapons systems, and her unfavourable strategic situation.

I agree that India was seriously shaken by her defeat in 1962, and that it did reveal just how much is wrong with India to-day. But the tendency of her disillusioned leftist friends to assume that since defence may be difficult and costly, it is not worth attempting at all, suggests

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the degree to which the myth of Chinese omnipotence and the complementary myth of Indian impotence have taken hold. I do not know how Indians feel about this. But if I were Indian, I think that I would resent far more bitterly the intellectual betrayal of those who once helped to break the hold of Britain on India, than I would the rather bumbling efforts of those who want to make India a dutiful political and military client of the Western alliance. If I were Indian I should need to be wary of both: if India were indeed in crisis, I think I should be interested to know who my friends were.

Versions of Pastoral

The Machine in the Garden. By LEO MARX. *Oxford*, 48s.

Mark Twain's Fable of Progress. By HENRY NASH SMITH. *Rutgers University Press*, $3.50.

THE "NEW CRITICISM" tended to treat literary works as though they were conceived in some absolute trans-historical realm free from the defilement of historical contingencies: as a way of stressing intrinsic aesthetic qualities as opposed to the referential interest of a work's content this approach had some value. But taken to extremes, it proved to be sterile and often absurd. For clearly art is saturated with the history from which it emerges; it bears the unmistakable impress of the age which shaped it. However, the relationship between the world of events and the world of imaginings is far from simple. Things happen—countries are discovered, machines are invented, populations move—such is the realm of fact. Then the human imagination reacts to the facts and produces, say, *The Tempest* or *Moby Dick*. But by the time the facts have passed through the strange alembic of the human imagination, many crucial selections and reshapings have been made. That is why it is dangerous for the historian to go direct to a work of art for historical evidence. It would be very misleading to reconstruct mid-Victorian England from the Dickens world, as Humphry House showed us so clearly. Similarly, *Huckleberry Finn* tells us more about Mark Twain's inward state in the '80s than it does about American conditions in the '30s. By the time human dreams and fears have been added to actual events and social data, facts have gone some way to becoming fables. Even the most "realistic" novel tends to mythologise history in its own way. When art

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holds up the mirror to nature it is always a distorting mirror.

However, the relationship between art and history is there and of supreme importance. The question is—how to get at it? Lucien Goldmann (in *The Hidden God*) developed a dialectical approach which promises to be a major step forward in this field. He moves continually from the text to the "world vision" it expresses, setting up a dialogue between events, beliefs, and imaginings which gradually reveals the total human significance of key literary works. In America as well some important work has been done which tries to mediate fruitfully between history and literature—Henry Nash Smith's *Virgin Land* was a notable example (just as Ian Watt's *Rise of the Novel* was an important English contribution). Now Leo Marx, confessedly indebted to Smith, has produced a distinguished work which again demonstrates that combined disciplines, tactfully deployed, can yield rich results. He is perhaps a bit cursory with his historical evidence, while he can be implausibly over-ingenious in wringing a significance out of a literary work, and I suspect that his "sociology" would appear unprofessional to experts. With that said, it can be confidently asserted that this is an important contribution to our understanding of some of the enigmas and conflicts at work in the American imagination, particularly in the 19th century.

His purpose is "to describe and evaluate the uses of the pastoral ideal in the interpretation of American experience"—important enough, when you consider the rapidity with which America changed from being an untouched Eden to the most industrialised nation in the world. He starts by concentrating on a symbolic incident, recorded by Hawthorne in his notebooks in 1844. There Hawthorne describes an idyllic moment of passive communion with nature in "Sleepy Hollow." But then suddenly—"hark! there is the whistle of the locomotive." The idyll is interrupted by the intrusion of a man-made machine. Peace and concord are shattered by power and dissonance. A tendency to submit to nature is sharply disturbed by evidence of man's aggressive power against nature. Relaxed day-dreaming has to give way to a more complex state of mind which takes account of a "counter-force" which works against the pastoral ideal. It is this complex state of mind—produced by the presence of "the machine in the garden"—which Marx explores. First he goes back to Virgil's *Eclogues* where, he says, "we are made to feel that a rural myth is threatened by an incursion of history," and he stresses that the pastoral ideal there is as carefully distinguished from primitivism as it is from urban society. The shepherd lives in "the middle landscape," free from both the pressure of the town and the violent uncertainties of total wildness. That is to say, the image of the shepherd seeks to resolve the conflict between the world of art and the world of nature. This is the essence of the pastoral dream. But in 19th-century America the dream was increasingly threatened by industrialisation, and it is Marx's contention that in many of the major works of the time we can see the imagination trying to cope both with the dream *and* the threat.

BUT BEFORE TURNING to these works, he looks back at Elizabethan travel literature and *The Tempest,* maintaining that right from the moment of the discovery of the New World it was hospitable to contradictory reactions. One traveller will call America a "garden of incredible abundance"; another, "a hideous wilderness." The former interpretation clearly implies that nature is hospitable to man, the latter suggests that man needs to exert power to control nature's hostility. In *The Tempest* many different attitudes are represented—from Gonzalo's primitivism (which denies history and the need for human work), to Antonio's worldly cynicism, down to Caliban who is the incarnation of unimproved nature. Prospero mediates between these extremes—his art works *with* nature, just as his masque projects a visionary landscape which is *not* nature untouched by man, but rather an idealised version of the English countryside, full of evidence of man's creative labour. Prospero is thus like the shepherd in the middle landscape, fusing the best of man's art with the vitality of nature's wildness.

Marx then looks at some of the confusions in early works on America (Beverley for instance praises nature for its abundance which frees man from the curse of work, then berates his contemporaries for their idleness!), and concentrates on the crucial paradoxes in Jefferson's writing. Like Crèvecœur, Jefferson was drawn to the pastoral vision of America as a rural refuge from European urban corruption, but he also realised it would be impossible for America to "hold off the forces already transforming the economy of Europe." Like Emerson after him he wanted the benefits of local "manufactures" without the attendant horrors connected with the factory system. His own private preference was for the pastoral life of the "middle landscape," but he knew this would remain "theory only" because "our people have a decided taste for navigation and commerce." In more general terms we could say that he realised, with sadness, that there are energies and instincts of power and aggression in man which simply would not be satisfied by the ideal figure of the shepherd or the farmer.

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Indeed, as Marx shows in his next section, many Americans were welcoming the machine. They thrilled to the inventions of the steamboat and the railroad, they wrote ecstatically about them in what Marx calls "the rhetoric of the technological sublime." Even Whitman welcomed the machine, as, indeed, he welcomed everything else. What is interesting, as Marx shows, is how various apologists tried to make a place for the machine in the myth of the garden. Tench Coxe was a key figure here and he tried to blend machines and factories with the garden by saying that without the former "certain great natural powers of the country will remain inactive and useless." Machinery is shown as collaborating with nature, not violating it. Of course, there were some protests at the rapid mechanisation of America—but the protestors were dismissed as mere dreamers. More formidably, men like Carlyle warned that "men are grown mechanical in head and heart, as well as in hand": but there were confident defenders of the machine more than ready to attack this view. For them the machine was the great liberator. By and large Marx shows that around the mid-century most people accepted the notion that machine technology could be made to belong to the "middle landscape" which symbolised man and nature working in harmony together. The point of retaining the pastoral ideal was this:

> It enabled the nation to continue defining its purpose as the pursuit of rural happiness while devoting itself to productivity, wealth, and power.

Marx then moves on to consider certain key literary works as they reveal and dramatise this profound conflict of values. In *Walden* Thoreau also described the invasion of the violent locomotives in his rural asylum—"so is your pastoral life whirled past and away." He was tough-minded enough to face up to the fact that the pastoral ideal cannot be lived, and profound enough to realise that the location of his most cherished ideals and values was not "out there" in nature so much as in his own consciousness. They are "the product of... the mythopoeic power of the human mind." In *Ethan Brand* Hawthorne produced a disturbing character who is an "embodiment of a changing America." Once he lived in harmony with nature, but with the advent of the kilns (*i.e.* industrial power), strange ideas take possession of him (they are described as coming out of the furnace itself) which "disturb the counterpoise between his mind and heart." Finally he throws himself into the diabolical fires which nourished his mental perversions—with the result that nature suddenly changes its aspect and appears to revert to a charming pastoral condition. But, as Marx suggests, Hawthorne invests the ending

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with a "subtle meretriciousness' which reveals that any hope of reverting to a pastoral age is a false dream.

Melville too felt the pastoral impulse ("Is there no green thing to be seen?" asks Tommo in *Typee*) and it is an important part of Ishmael's quest. But in a letter to Hawthorne, Melville reveals his sharp awareness that "the 'all' feeling" (as he calls the human desire to merge with nature) has its limits.

> This "all" feeling, though, there is some truth in. You must often have felt it, lying on the grass on a warm summer's day.... But what plays the mischief with the truth of it is that men will insist upon the universal application of a temporary feeling or opinion.

Man should not try to live out his momentary dreams. And in *Moby Dick*, Marx suggests that there are three key moments when a mood of dreamy communion with nature and pastoral yearning is suddenly broken by vivid reminders of the tremendous powers of human aggression. Similarly the whale is deeply ambiguous because so is man's relationship with nature—we defy it while we plunder it. Ahab is "the perverted, monomaniac incarnation of the Age of Machinery" (a reading amply justified by the text), and although Ishmael attains a superior wisdom and survives Ahab's vortex of destructive power, he is left "as an 'orphan' floating helplessly on the margin of the scene as society founders."

In *Huckleberry Finn* the pastoral idyll of the raft is literally shattered by a steam-boat and it was partially the realisation that there was nowhere in contemporary America where the idyll could flourish that contributed to the confused unsatisfactory ending of the book and the pessimism of Mark Twain's subsequent work. Indeed a late work called *What is Man?* starts with a terse subtitle: "*a*. Man the Machine." However it was Henry Adams who provided the clearest symbolic tableau of the growing contradictions in American culture—the Dynamo and the Virgin, representing "two kingdoms of force which had nothing in common but attraction." So Marx rounds off his thesis:

> To use the Adams idiom, the sound that Hawthorne had heard in Sleepy Hollow in 1844 was a new, perhaps final, outbreak of the ancient war between the kingdom of love and the kingdom of power, and it has been waged endlessly in American writing ever since.

Like Lionel Trilling and Richard Chase, Marx thinks that much of the American genius consists in being able to embrace unresolved contradictions—in this case between the threat of the machine and the dream of the garden. The ideal solution, of life in the middle landscape, will no longer work. But, he says, American writers are not to be blamed for not creating any new ideal which will reconcile the dream and the threat. It is enough that they have clarified the opposition so profoundly.

THERE IS A REAL problem here, however, the problem Hart Crane pointed to when he said "unless poetry can absorb the machine... it has failed of its full contemporary function." Henry Nash Smith's little book explores in great detail one of the most important early attempts to celebrate the technological age positively. He writes: "The task that faced writers of the post-Civil War period was the discovery or the construction of a new system of values taking into account the new conditions"—i.e. the new conditions created by technology and industry. Mark Twain tried to do this in *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*; and by examining this book with much tact and learning, Smith is able to reveal most interestingly just why it failed and just what the significance of the failure was.

The Yankee is not only a clown: with his command of technology he is potentially a new type of epic hero—a capitalist hero. Mark Twain himself was at first very optimistic about the republican ideals and mechanical inventions which were creating modern America: but gradually he fell into a deep pessimism as he saw what that America was becoming, and his pessimism breaks up the book. Hank Morgan comes to ancient Britain as a saviour, a bringer of "progress." He ends with an orgy of embittered destruction, slaughtering no less than 25,000 knights with his lethal modern weapons. "The Yankee can destroy knight-errantry but he cannot create a viable system to take its place." After this book, Mark Twain's disillusion lasted for life. His pastoral dream had died with *Huckleberry Finn*. In *A Connecticut Yankee* (his next book) he tried to find positive values in industry and technology. He failed. More disturbingly, Smith asks whether any writer has in fact succeeded. It is to be hoped that he himself will go on to explore other attempts. The matter is, after all, of some importance. History provides the facts, but it is up to the human imagination to provide the values. If it should happen that we create a technological world which the human imagination is unable to transform into values, we might find ourselves in a bleak landscape. Like Wallace Stevens' "Snow Man," perhaps:

> *...the listener, who listens in the snow,*
> *And, nothing himself, beholds*
> *Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.*

Tony Tanner

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The Queneau Country

By Richard Mayne

FOR WINTER SUNSHINE, try the Queneau country. Bordered on the west by Surrealism, home of picturesque Breton folklore, and on the east by the kingdom of Ubu Roi, it's not overcrowded by tourists—although Monsieur Hulot may have spent his holiday in the neighbourhood. The natives, if eccentric, are generally friendly: there are plenty of typically Gallic cafés and amusement parks: for the studious, there are mathematical excursions, philosophical rambles, and even an *Encyclopédie des Sciences Inexactes*.

A serious drawback, of course, is the food.

> Une magnifique sardine rance, un très mince morceau de carne orné de bouts de bois, et lorsque arrive le délectable moment de la dégustation de la banane-confiture, le voisin délicat mange de la morue.... Un quidam, pris dans le premier coup de filet, absorbait avec rapidité la saloperie qu'on lui octroyait et, vite, on le remplaçait par le délicat amateur de poisson, lequel pestait lorsque, arrivé lui-même au yaourt ou aux mendiants, un retardataire commençait à s'introduire des tripes dans le gosier et ce au moyen d'une fourchette qui servit la veille à crever le miroir de deux oeufs déjà anciens, ainsi qu'en témoignait le jaune d'or de ses dents.

The wines and spirits, too, are undistinguished:

> tokay, bourgogne de Californie, marc de Nicaragua, pipi du Sénégal.

The local cinemas, on the other hand, are well worth a visit.

> Puis vient le documentaire, la pêche à la sardine. Les gosses ça les emmerde le docucu, et comment. . . . L'entr'acte se termine, quelques boulettes gluantes de salive transpercent encore les airs, des cris divers surgissent tardifs çà et là, enfin la lumière s'éteint et dans un calme plat commence à se dérouler l'histoire....

One final difficulty, it's true, is the language. which isn't the French of the Academy. *"'Doukipudonktan,' se demanda Gabriel excédé." "Imélamin'hocudlastarl" "Polocilacru." "Askondi." "Mézalor, mézalor, késkon nobtyin! Sa dvyin incrouayab...."* Fortunately, there's a certain affinity—almost a special relationship—with the hapless Anglo-Saxons. Phonetic spelling is offered not only to the French, but also *"poor lay Zanglay"*; and some of the inhabitants even speak English, after a fashion. *"Itt ouaze véri inntérestigne," dit Lehameau. "Ao dou you dou?"* And if the locals find you funny, don't give it a thought: *"Zey lâffe... bicose zey are stioupide."*

The first of these quotations dates back to the early 1930s; but not until after World War II was the Queneau country really put on the map. Raymond Queneau first became widely known, in fact, when in 1947 he published *Exercices de style*, an ingenious collection of ninety-nine different ways of telling the same fairly pointless story: some of them were put on by a Saint-Germain-des-Près cabaret, and brought the house down. At about the same time, one of Queneau's poems was made famous by being set to music by Joseph Kosma and sung by Juliette Greco. Then, in 1959, he published *Zazie dans le métro*, which rapidly became a best-seller and was later made into a Marx-Bros.-like film by Louis Malle. Translated into nine languages, the subject of three recent critical works and at least four university theses, a member of the Académie Goncourt and Director of the Gallimard *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade*, Queneau cuts quite a figure on the Paris literary scene: but despite good English translations of six of his books, including a scintillating version by Barbara Wright of *Exercices de style*, he seems to remain rather baffling outside France. "A light-hearted little fantasy" —"so very French": this was how two reputable English weeklies greeted one of his most successful books. And yet it was to Raymond Queneau that Iris Murdoch dedicated her first novel, *Under the Net*.

That extraordinary intellectual charade, blending picaresque high spirits with philosophical obliquity, and only hinting at the greater imaginative involvement of some of Miss Murdoch's later work, indeed bears some resemblance to Raymond Queneau's first novel, *Le Chiendent*. Published in 1933 when Queneau was thirty, and four years after he had cut loose from André Breton's Surrealist movement, this started out as an attempt to re-write Descartes in demotic French. Such an enterprise sounds a little like the far-fetched endeavours of one of Miss Murdoch's heroes; but it's perhaps less abstruse than it seems. *"Le bon sens est la chose du monde la mieux partagée: car chacun pense en être si bien pourvu que ceux même qui sont les plus difficiles à contenter en toute autre chose n'ont point coutume d'en désirer plus qu'ils en ont."* A typical crack by one of Queneau's char-

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acters? Of course not: the first sentence of Descartes' *Discourse on Method*. But the reflection illuminates the follies chronicled in *Le Chiendent*, peopled as it is by farcical wiseacres and avaricious mutts. Allusions to Descartes—including a pun on his name—decorate the novel; and one of its characters, first seen as a mere "silhouette," begins to become three-dimensional only when he starts to think. *"Lorsque j'ai regardé le monde,"* he reflects later, *"j'ai commencé à exister peut-être dans les livres de philosophie."* Some French critics have seen *Le Chiendent*'s ruminations on what Queneau calls *"l'être et le nonnête"* as both an exegesis of Descartes and an anticipation of Sartre's *l'Etre et le Néant*: but in Descartes' *cogito ergo sum*, thought was the proof of existence, not its cause, while Sartre's philosophising is certainly more serious than that of *Le Chiendent*, although perhaps equally confused.

Queneau's novel, indeed, is no animated treatise. As he later told an interviewer, *"bientôt je me suis aperçu que j'étais tombé dans le bain romanesque."* There most readers would no doubt prefer to leave him: for *Le Chiendent* is a magnificent comic novel. As Claude Simonnet has remarked in a long and learned commentary, it resembles a poem in that it can't be paraphrased: but its plot, which moves with the sly and absurd precision of a P. G. Wodehouse farce, concerns the doing of a number of eccentrics living in the suburbs of Paris. There's Madame Cloche, the haggish midwife who sits at café tables hoping to witness street accidents and dreaming of *la dolce vita* on the Riviera; there's *le père* Taupe, a rag-and-bone man whom everyone believes to have a miser's hoard concealed in his hut; there's Saturnin, a concierge vainly trying to write a masterpiece; there's Etienne Marcel, the original "silhouette," a commuter who gets involved with these people when he begins to "think"; there's Théo, his detestable stepson; there's Bébé Toutout, a diabolical dwarf who forces himself on the Marcel family like *The Man Who Came to Dinner*; there's Narcense and his friend Potice (a simple spoonerism); there's a *deus ex machina* known as Pierre Le Grand. With clockwork precision, all these and others perform complex gyrations in the story, misunderstanding each other, living in dream-worlds, but always acting, however crazily, with perfect logic on the evidence that each of them has. Like Evelyn Waugh's *Vile Bodies*, the book ends in a catastrophic war. This gives Queneau the chance to parody lethally the language of martial propaganda; and just as the bitterness of the ending begins to be oppressive, sleight of hand closes the circle of the story, and it ends with the scene and the sentence at which it began.

Something of the book's flavour can perhaps be caught in quotation.

> "Excusez-moi, je vais rentrer à Paris. Et vous-même, habitez ici?"
>
> "Non. Paris. Mais je vais passer quelques jours ici. J'observe un homme."
>
> "Tiens. Romancier?"
>
> "Non. Personnage."
>
> Etienne le reconnut et lui demanda si sa santé était bonne. L'autre répondit qu'elle n'était point mauvaise; et le fait est qu'il se portait fort bien. À son tour, il s'enquit de la santé du visiteur et apprit sans surprise que celui-ci n'avait pas à s'en plaindre. Ces préliminaires ne durèrent que quelques secondes, car leur complexité apparente cachait une simplicité profonde.
>
> Les assiettes se vident et le potage devient passé. Les bruits variés accompagnant ce devenir demanderaient une description attentive, car de grands événements s'annoncent dans ce concert de glouglous et de gargouillements. Si l'un tire sur son bouillon du bout des lèvres, l'autre l'engloutit férocement. Pour le refroidir, les uns soufflent et d'autres en font des cascades. On lappe et l'on clapote. Ici, c'est un chuintement et là une dissonance. De cette musique, naît peu à peu une harmonie élémentaire; bientôt de bouche en oreilles, les paroles vont voler et, passant de l'animal au social et de la gloutonnerie au bavardage, chacune des quinzes personnes énumérées plus haut commence à s'apercevoir de nouveau de la présence de quatorze autres. Car, à gamelle vide, nez qui se lève.
>
> Le père et le fils s'entre-sanglotent sur l'épaule; les plus nobles sentiments vagissent dans le fond de leur poitrine; c'que c'est émouvant tout d'même, pensent-ils, chacun pour leur compte.

ANY SEARCH for "influence" on *Le Chiendent* would certainly throw up Rabelais, and Queneau himself has cited James Joyce. Certainly, the self-consciousness of the writing, the constant interposition of the author, recalls Samuel Beckett's remark about Joyce: "He is not writing about something: he is writing something." How far the accumulation of farcical incident can also be traced to the Surrealists is less certain; but in his next two major novels, *Les Derniers Jours* (1936) and *Odile* (1937), Queneau moved closer to conventional forms. *Les Derniers Jours* (which the author doesn't wish to reprint) was in part the novel of student life in Paris that almost every French writer has to get out of his system, rather as his English counterpart tends to write at least once about his schooldays. In this respect, despite some fanciful, melodramatic, and supranatural elements, it led on to *Odile*, which Queneau admits is more autobiographical than most of his other works. Here, eight years after the event, he describes what looks very like his personal break with Breton, thinly disguised

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as "Anglarès": but despite the scope for mockery offered by the master and his disciples, the mood of the book is dazed, numbed, and bleak, a little reminiscent of Sartre's *La Nausée*, which came out in the following year.

Not until then, in fact, did Queneau reopen, with *Les Enfants du Limon*, the rich vein of comedy he'd tapped with *Le Chiendent*. This again was a crowded, heavily orchestrated novel, with philosophical overtones: one of its characters, who finally encounters the author himself in a publisher's waiting-room, is compiling the famous *Encyclopédie des Sciences Inexactes*. In the publisher's note on the book, probably written by Queneau himself, who was now employed by Gallimard, the problem of "recognition" is said to be the central theme of the novel; but this is doubtless more than somewhat of a *blague*. Once more, no plot summary could possibly be adequate: but amateurs of eccentricity will relish the sanctimonious Madame Hachamoth, the *"pauvre diable"* Purpulan (possibly supernatural, but certainly bold), and the culture-snob Astolphe.

> Deux autobus passèrent complets; Mme. Hachamoth que son numéro d'ordre n'autorisait qu'à des espoirs lointains ramassa discrètement par terre celui d'un monsieur qui las d'attendre venait de se jeter dans un taxi.
>
> "Mon Dieu," marmonna-t-elle, "je vous remercie de m'avoir fait trouver ce bon numéro."

> Humide et nu, le sieur Chambernac, proviseur du lycée de Mourmèche, sortait donc d'un de ses bains journaliers, lorsqu'il perçut à travers les gouttes d'eau savonneuse qui bulbulaient dans ses oreilles, un toc.
>
> "N'entrez pas," hurla-t-il pas sûr de ne pas avoir fermé sa porte.
>
> "Auriez-vous l'obligeance de répéter l'avant-dernier mot de la phrase que vous venez de prononcer?" dit le toquer de l'autre côté (il va bientôt être de celui-ci).
>
> "Quoi?"
>
> "Je vous demandais de répéter."
>
> "Qui êtes-vous bongiueu? Le plombier?"
>
> "Non."
>
> "Alors, fichez-moi la paix."
>
> "Comment? Je n'entends pas bien."
>
> "Je vous dis de ne pas entrer."
>
> "'Entrez,' vous avez bien prononcé ce mot: 'entrez'?" Et il entra....
>
> "Moi," continua l'inconnu moins aimablement, "je ne comprends pas qu'on dise à des gens d'entrer dans sa salle de bains cantonnier tout nu."
>
> "Couac?" béguibégua Chambernac.
>
> "Eh bien, c'est simple," fit l'autre furieux, "vous me dites d'entrer et vous êtes tout nu. Faut avoir du vice. Moi, des moeurs comme ça, j'en suis tout révolté."

> Le premier il a été entendre jouer du Bach sans connaître ses notes, le premier il a collectionné les boules de verre, les mappe-mondes et les bateaux modèle réduit, le premier il a porté des cravates tricotées à la main, des mocassins et des plus-fours, le premier il a découvert les brocanteurs de la Foire aux Puces et les cartomanciennes de la rue de Rivoli, le premier il est allé dans le Midi en été, le premier il a eu marre des grands express européens et des aventures sordides dans les grands ports également européens, le premier il est allé dans les petits cinémas des boulevards extérieurs pour voir des films américains non-artistiques.... [all this in 1938].

In 1939, Queneau produced a third comic novel, *Un Rude Hiver*, set in his home town of Le Havre during World War I: but despite the usual brilliant beginning and some good lines—

> "Moi," dit Mme. Dutertre, "si je dis du mal des ouvriers, c'est parce que je les aime."

—this lacks the gaiety and invention of its fellows. Far more successful, and far more popular, was *Pierrot mon ami* (1942) with its background of the fairground (l'Uni-Park) and the Palace de la Rigolade, its phoney fakir Crouia-Bey, and its cargo of animals in transit with Pierrot, including a monkey and a wild boar. Already in *Le Chiendent* there'd been some byplay with a raffish illusionist; and it's clear that something in this circus background deeply appeals. The same is true of the cinema, for as Queneau himself put it, *"il ne faut pas oublier que cet art est né dans les kermesses, a vécu dans les faubourgs et s'est épanoui sans l'aide des gens cultivés."* Many commentators have remarked on Queneau's cinematic style—cutting, for instance, between two separate scenes even throughout a conversation in one of them; and it's no coincidence that his next novel after the lively *Pierrot* was an ode to the local fleapit that was also one of his best sustained jokes. This was *Loin de Rueil* (1944), the story of Jacques L'Aumône, a kind of French Walter Mitty intoxicated by the cinema who lives in what might be a dreamworld, and might be real. He ends up, or seems to end up, as James Charity, a Hollywood star, having been (or seemed to be) a chemist and a boxing champion along the way. In the end, the reader's as much in the dark as ever—the dark of the local cinema when the lights go down. Apart from the documentary on sardine-fishing already mentioned, the best things in the book are its nostalgic and ironic evocations of creaking old movies. For anyone with similar tastes, *Loin de Rueil* is a continuous pleasure.

Queneau's next novel—not counting *Exercices de style*—was *Saint Glinglin*, an uneven fantasy published in 1948, which somewhat uneasily fused and expanded two previous efforts. A

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year earlier, under the pseudonym of "Sally Mara," he had published a *jeu d'esprit* entitled *On est toujours trop bon avec les femmes*. The title is perhaps a private allusion to Faulkner's *Mosquitoes*; but the book itself, which describes the dire sexual indignities suffered by a beleaguered young woman during an insurrection in Dublin, reads like a mocking and scabrous parody of James Hadley Chase. Queneau was evidently taken with the conceit of "Sally Mara," since he later published her *Journal Intime* and then her Collected Works, prefaced by a dispute between her and himself. Spoof of this kind was in the air: it was at about that time that Queneau's friend, the late Boris Vian, had published his bogus "translation from the American," *J'irai cracher sur vos tombes*. Not until 1952, however, did a new novel signed by Queneau see the light. This was *Le Dimanche de la vie*, which many consider his best work since *Le Chiendent*.

HERE, ONCE AGAIN, philosophy and farce link hands across the page. The book's title comes from Hegel, and its central character Valentin Brû, a simple ex-soldier who marries a middle-aged shopkeeper, looks like a cross between the Good Soldier Schweik and Dostoevsky's Idiot, whom Queneau has called his favourite character in fiction. But despite these allusions, what chiefly strikes one about *Le Dimanche de la vie* is the warm serenity of its humour. One typical scene, too long to quote, is the dialogue between bride and bridegroom, debating where and when and how they'll spend their honeymoon. The shop can't be left, and if the honeymoon's postponed till the summer, bang goes the summer holiday. *"Ils finirent par adopter la seule solution possible, la seule et unique, à savoir que le seul Valentin ferait seul le voyage de noces."*

After this type of effortless drollery, Queneau's most recent and most famous novel, *Zazie dans le métro* (1959), strikes me as somewhat forced and vulgarised, "brilliant" though it is. Even the title is a trap, since Zazie, who's left in Paris with her "uncle" Gabriel (a *danseuse de charme*) while her mother meets a lover, never gets inside the *métro*, because it's on strike. Similarly, another character, endlessly repeating a single catch-phrase, turns out to be a parrot—and so it goes on. By comparison with the earlier novels, everything seems to be piled on a little too thick. Nevertheless, *Zazie* is a good introduction to the Queneau country, particularly since the first celebrated word of the story,

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"Doukipudonktan" (D'ou qu'il pue donc tant), raises the issue of Queneau's language, which so obsesses his critics and admirers in France.

In a country where the Academy still hands down linguistic rulings, and where newspapers carry weekly features on the purity of the national tongue, the gulf between the vernacular and Mandarin prose still tends to be wide. Elegant variation, for instance, in England now chiefly restricted to sportswriters, is still *de rigueur* in the whole of the French press: Brussels automatically becomes *"la capitale belge"* the second time it's mentioned in a paragraph. Partly through his reading of Vendryes' *Le Langage*, and partly through his military service, Queneau was struck by the gulf between French demotic and French *"cathare-vousa"*; and at about the time when writers in England were attacking Mandarin usage, he began to do the same in France. He wasn't alone, since Céline published his *Voyage au bout de la nuit* in 1932: but Céline's "popular" language was in fact highly artificial and in the long run rather limited in its range. But Queneau's attack was threefold: on vocabulary, on syntax, and—partly under Joyce's influence—on spelling.

Critics and interviewers have tended to pursue these subjects with a tenacity worthy of greater things; and Queneau himself has occasionally pushed his theories to the limit, especially in his critical collection *Bâtons, chiffres et lettres* (1950) and in a series of radio interviews with Georges Charbonnier, published in 1962. But he's also said that it was just by chance that one day he wrote

Moi jmegris du bout des douas
Seskilya dplus distingle

—and he's firmly denied ever wanting to be a spelling reformer. Phoneticisms, in fact, occur in his stories partly to heighten the comic effect—as when two angry card-players in *Le Chiendent* shout *"Meussieu!"* at each other, meaning the reverse of the politeness implied by *"Monsieur"*—and partly as one aspect of Queneau's unspoken "theory of games" in art. This in turn is linked to his interest in mathematics, and thereby—coming full circle—back to philosophy.

In an interview in November, 1949, André Gillois asked Queneau, *"Aimez-vous votre métier littéraire?" "C'est décevant,"* replied Queneau, *"mais je l'aime."* Pressed to say why he found it disappointing, he answered significantly: *"C'est un peu futile quand même."* Later on, he qualified this by adding that he didn't always find it so: but his remark can be set alongside a similar statement to Georges Charbonnier. *"Il y a un côté jeu; c'est un jeu dont on invente les régles et auquel on obéit."*

Measured against this dictum, even Queneau's early work can be seen as the opposite of "automatic writing" or Surrealist art. True, there's always been an element of playfulness, as in his more recent flirtations with the burlesque *Collège de Pataphysique*, descended from Alfred Jarry of *Ubu Roi* fame: its "researches" include scissors-and-paste games with classic texts, and one of Queneau's contributions has been the publication of *Cent mille milliards de poèmes*—ten sonnets specially bound to enable 10^{14} to be assembled from the separate lines of each. But if this is the *"côté jeu,"* such games are worthwhile only if they're played under strict rules. Partly for this reason, the structure of Queneau's novels, from *Le Chiendent* onwards, has usually had a firm mathematical basis, a scaffolding or skeleton which the author then conceals. For one of his major interests is mathematics, on which he's written seriously and learnedly, notably in the essays collected in *Bords* (1963). At one time, if the suggestion of *Odile* is to be relied on, he thought of making it his career; and his comments on his more recent work as Director of the *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade* have revealed a range of knowledge astonishing in the author of picaresque fantasies like *Pierrot mon ami*.

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The Franco-American critic Henri Peyre has said that one of Queneau's stumbling blocks is this "immense store of knowledge, rivalling that of Joyce and occasionally intruding into the tale as pedantry." This may refer to *Les Enfants du Limon*, into which Queneau smuggled large portions of the *Encyclopédie des Sciences Inexactes*, or *Dictionnaire des Fous Littéraires*, which he'd previously peddled in vain round most of the Paris publishers. But when one considers his work as a whole, it's hard to feel that the criticism's fair, since one of the strengths of Queneau's writing, comic and otherwise, is the polymath intelligence and awareness that underlies it and gives it depth.

ALMOST ALL HIS LIFE, Queneau has written poems, ranging from impressionist and rather faded nocturnes, in his youth, to the encyclopaedic *Petite cosmogonie portative* of 1950. Some of them, like the source of the couplet quoted earlier, are comic *jeux d'esprit*: but most of them, and particularly the autobiographical *Chêne et Chien* (1937), are personal and considerable in their impact. Outwardly, Queneau's life appears to have fairly even tenor: but he has evidently suffered badly from asthma, was psycho-analysed as a young man, and—again if *Odile* is to be trusted—later went through a period of loveless and solitary depression. I'm not trying to claim that the Queneau clown is really a Hamlet—although *Saint Glinglin* provides some sobering hints about his possible relations with his father. But what I would suggest is that Queneau's humour, like all true humour, has as its sombre background a full awareness of the predicament of man. Depth is a recurrent theme in his poems, as in his comic novels; and if "philosophy" helps him to face it, this is true in the popular as well as a technical sense. In a poem on growing old, in a collection well named *L'Instant fatal*, he wrote:

> je dévale la pente
> dies irae dies illa
> sic ibo ad astra
> mais comme ce farceur
> tombant d'un ascenseur
> disait aux spectateurs
> des différents étages
> qui le regardaient choir
> "jusqu'à présent ma foi
> ça ne va pas trop mal
> j'espère fermement
> que ça continuera
> encore un peu comme ça"....

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PRESS

The "Lobby" & Beyond

THE QUALITY of political reporting in Britain has been under increasingly heavy criticism in the past few years. It is a constant source of grievance among politicians; academics like Mr. David Butler (of Nuffield College) have long compared it unfavourably with American reporting; some journalists such as Mr. Anthony Howard have developed something of an obsession about the Lobby—the main source of political news—while Mr. Clive Irving's ambition in life appears to be, judging by some remarks recently on TV, "to smash the Lobby." A further twist to the criticism since last October's election has been the knowledge of Mr. Harold Wilson's long-standing and close relations with the Lobby which has inspired a mixture of jealousy among other journalists and a wider suspicion that the Lobby is now no more than "a mouthpiece for the Prime Minister"—a suspicion which Conservatives, many of whom have never forgiven the Lobby for its detailed reporting of the anti-Macmillan campaign in their own party, have naturally seized upon. The decision of the *Sunday Times* to appoint a "Whitehall correspondent" (Mr. Howard) to share the coverage of politics from outside the Palace of Westminster is the first sign of the Lobby's monopoly in the handling of political news being broken.

Such widespread criticism must be taken seriously. High standards of political reporting—both the ability of the Press to supply it and the willingness of Government and Parliament to facilitate it—are an essential prerequisite of good government. I believe—writing with twelve years experience as a Lobby correspondent—that there are good grounds for dissatisfaction although, unfortunately, a good deal of the criticism seems to me to be either misconceived or based on ignorance. Nonetheless there is an urgent need for a change in the relationship between Press, Government and politicians—and also in the quality of political reporting and comment and the attitude of newspaper offices to it.

IAN WALLER *is the political correspondent of the* Sunday Telegraph *in London. His widely-discussed article on* "Pressure Politics" *appeared in the August 1962* ENCOUNTER.

But this must be firmly said at the start: it is no use politicians complaining about ill-informed writing if they are not prepared to recognise that the fullest possible flow of political news—and not just the pre-packed material produced by Public Relations Officers—is in the public interest; that the Press is a partner in the business of government and politics in exactly the same sense that a vigorous and critical Opposition is vital to Parliament. This, unfortunately, is not a view that is widely held in British political life, particularly in the Conservative "Establishment" and the higher reaches of Whitehall. All too often the Press is regarded as something either to be made use of or ignored; its role no more than the reporting of decisions arrived at. The Press, of course, does not accept this. But the barriers that exist, and the reluctance to accept that the Press and public have a right to share in the formulation of policy, mean that far too much comment is based on inadequate knowledge, and that political writers are forced back on to speculative writing, vague guesswork, spurious forecasting, and the irrelevant personalisation of issues.

THE MOMENT, I believe, has come for Fleet Street, as well as politicians, to have a fresh look at the whole problem of the coverage of politics and, indeed, public affairs generally. My immediate concern is with Parliament and government although the issue goes, of course, much wider. There is, for example, the voluminous reporting of trade unions, with every minute detail of their activities recounted, but too little of the activities and responsibilities of managements or their group organisations (*e.g.* the F.B.I.). "Industrial Correspondents" see themselves too much as mere trade union correspondents. Nor can anyone be happy about the extent to which the "Diplomatic Correspondents" have succumbed to the Foreign Office's news-management techniques, its pernicious system of "trusties" and the subtle but very powerful pressure put on journalists who cause "embarrassment"—(*i.e.* adopt a critical attitude to the conduct of British foreign policy or draw heavily on other sources of information beyond the F.O. and a handful of Western embassies). The Foreign Office has always regarded the Press as an instrument of diplomacy; Fleet Street, it seems to me, is all too ready to comply.

The initiative for change must come from Fleet Street. It must be prepared to use its power and authority to break down the barriers of secrecy, the mysticism and aloofness that surround so much of our public life. But first it must set its own houses in order. One important

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factor is the calibre, authority, and status of its specialist writers. Another is the attitude of the Press to Authority—be it political, governmental or industrial—and its implicit acceptance of the role of supplicant. Again, there is the use that is made of news. The intense competitive pressures in the newspaper industry lead to demands for "hard news," an original "angle," the exclusive "forecast" (which has to be close enough to the event for everyone to remember that the *Daily Q* had it first, and is therefore as likely as not to have been deliberately leaked to prepare public opinion—the scoop that causes real embarrassment is much rarer). All this competitive pressure can be a healthy stimulus, but it also leads to over-emphasis and exaggeration that damage the prestige of the Press. It is, of course, far from easy to maintain a balance between producing popular readable papers and conveying the subtler nuances, ideas and undercurrents in their right perspective. But cannot more be done? And would not the prestige and authority of the Press benefit?

I WANT to deal with the particular problem of the reporting of politics. There is no lack of political news in the press. It is no use comparing (as many politicians do) the Press today with that of 50 years ago when it was produced for a minority of politically involved readers, avidly following the minutiae of debate and with the time and inclination to read endless columns of speeches. Nor is it any use complaining, like Mr. David Butler, that the popular press is primarily concerned with entertainment and "not even pretending to give all the facts that an intelligent voter would need to form a reasonable judgment on the men who are to govern them." The picture presented by the popular press is sharp, often over-written, and with a tendency to concentrate on the sensational. There are plenty of criticisms to be made of it. Nonetheless a picture does emerge which has played a part in helping to make Britain one of the most politically conscious countries in the world. The point at issue, however, is not the overall coverage of politics but the extent to which the Press fulfils its other vital functions of investigating, probing, and analysing.

David Butler is scathing in his criticism of the failure of Lobby correspondents to report the "real news" or get "scoops." A favourite example of this is the way no one realised, in a space of a mere 24 hours, that Mr. Macmillan rather than Mr. R. A. Butler would get the premiership in 1957. David Butler had as it turned out a splendid opportunity to demonstrate his superiority when he was covering the 1963 Blackpool conference for the BBC at which Mr. Macmillan's resignation was announced. In spite of the most assiduous lobbying of the much-despised Lobby correspondents as well as of politicians, his comments on the 10 o'clock news each evening revealed none of the insight I would have expected. The decision to allow R. A. Butler to make the final speech he described as "most important... the most ceremonial enthronement of a party leader the Conservative Party can do"; on the Friday he dismissed the suggestion that "if Lord Home wants it he can have it" as being "not as simple as all that"; his final comments on the Saturday included every possible name—even Mr. Iain Macleod. I make these points simply to show that political reporting is not as uncomplicated as some academic critics like to suggest. I would have thought, on the other hand, that Mr. Walter Terry's disclosure in the *Daily Mail* of Mr. Macmillan's intention to reshuffle his Cabinet in 1962, which preceded the famous purge, and Mr. Francis Boyd's disclosure in the *Guardian* that Lord Home was to be appointed Foreign Secretary, were two memorable and genuine Lobby scoops. In another field, the *Sunday Telegraph* can claim credit for revealing and pursuing—at considerable risk both in terms of libel and Parliamentary privilege—the East German and other politico-business pressure groups at Westminster.

THE COMPARISON so frequently made with the American Press—or with the best American political reporting, which is another thing—is misleading for a different reason. It completely ignores the difference in the role of the British and American political journalist, a difference that stems from the fact that British Ministers are answerable to the country through Parliament while the American Press provides the link between the Administration and the nation.

Here, in fact, lies one of the real problems. It seems to me that a most serious weakness in our democracy today is that the enormous expansion in the range of governmental activities has swamped the critical resources of Parliament as well as those of the Press. While power and decision-making have moved from Westminster to Whitehall, the political journalists remain centered on a Parliament that, as it is organised today, is incapable of obtaining the information it needs to form a proper judgment of the issues it is asked to decide on. The jealously guarded right of the Commons to know first what the Executive's intentions are is intended to assert Parliament's paramountcy over the Executive. The fact that it is increasingly losing effective control positively facilitates the Executive's natural predilection for secrecy. It is Parliament as much as the Press that must re-organise itself

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if the Executive is to be subjected to the critical examination it should receive. But it raises most immediately for the Press the question of whether its organisation is adequate and, in particular, whether Westminster-based Lobby Correspondents are any longer appropriate as the main source of political news.

THE "LOBBY" derives its name from the right, first granted by resolution of the Commons in 1884, for "a gentleman of the Press" to enter the Members' Lobby to talk to M.P.s. This was extended to the House of Lords in 1963. Until the war the Lobby was comparatively small, limited to the national and certain provincial daily papers, the London evening papers and the news agencies. The rest of the provincial press was admitted after the last war; now the BBC and ITV are represented and, more recently, the Sunday papers. Most newspapers now have two Lobby men with the result that the total strength is now 121, of whom perhaps 60 to 80 are likely to be at work at any one time. In addition to meeting Members individually in the lobbies for private talks, there are regular collective meetings with the Prime Minister's Press Officer, and Ministers or Opposition front-bench spokesmen, either on specific subjects or general policy. The meetings are held at the invitation of the Lobby in a room provided for them and are presided over by the Lobby Chairman—an important symbol of its independence of the parties or Government.

A fairly full account of the work of the Lobby is given by Lord Hill of Luton in his autobiography *Both Sides of the Hill*, and much was said about it during the recent Vassall Tribunal. Lobby men accept an obligation never to disclose the sources of their information received on "Lobby terms"—which covers both formal meetings and private discussions at Westminster. On this basis a good deal of confidential comment is given by M.P.s, enabling the Lobby man to present an informed account of thinking and attitudes to the issues of moment at Westminster. He does not, as Mr. Michael Foot once suggested, take an oath of secrecy. But he accepts the Lobby rules and a deliberate breach would justify his colleagues requesting the Serjeant-at-Arms to withdraw his permit—although this has never, so far as I know, been done.

The fact that the Lobby is more formalised than other journalistic groups, with written rules and an ultimate power of sanction—to say nothing of a slight element of mystery and privilege about its activities—accounts for some of the hostile criticism. But, of course, the same general principle of informal discussion and protection of the sources of information applies to all journalists. It is indispensable to a well-informed Press that those in authority should be able to talk frankly to journalists without fear of being quoted. The phrase, "Lobby terms," which attracts so much abuse, is no more than an ordinary journalistic convention.

The Lobby had its origins in the days when the party battle at Westminster was the essence of politics and when the actions of the Executive were on a comparatively limited scale and capable of easy perception and explanation. The party battles and the internal party tensions are still of great importance and are dealt with by the Lobby with skill and perception. It is, in fact, in this field that the Lobby is most expert, but to-day it is not the only one.

Lobby journalists include some of the shrewdest and best-informed political writers in the country and they have the advantage, lacking in some political commentators, of being in close touch with day-to-day movements of opinion both on the floor of the House and behind the scenes. The questioning at Lobby meetings can be among the most penetrating to be heard at any British press conference, and the mass of material that a Lobby man has to deal with is handled with a high degree of professional accuracy and perception. They have, too, a unique opportunity for assessing the worth of Ministers or Opposition leaders.

BUT ITS POST-WAR GROWTH has greatly weakened the Lobby's potential. The extent to which politicians are willing to talk frankly at a meeting must diminish with the size of the audience. Even worse is the enormous diversity of interests among its members, ranging from the serious national press to small provincial evening papers whose representatives are primarily concerned with a "local angle" to a national story. Collective news-gathering is anathema to a live independent Press, but it has grown in all fields since the war, and the Lobby is an example of it—no worse, perhaps, than many others but, like all others, susceptible to skilful "news management." But the Lobby has avoided one thing that some of the other groups have not been free of: it has refused to allow any attempt by the government or parties to discriminate between papers or individuals. In 1951, for example, the Conservatives attempted to provide special facilities for the "friendly Press," which was rightly resisted by all.

The Lobby suffers, too, from the characteristic English tendency to "clubbability" and can all too easily become part of the Parliamentary "establishment," a tendency encouraged by the fact that it lives and works at Westminster. But increasingly the best Lobby journalists are, rightly, going back to personal contacts—to

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individual rather than collective enterprise. Perhaps the greatest single weakness in the Lobby system derives from the excessive amount of work the Lobby man is expected to do. It is absurd that representatives of the quality papers should be turning out often up to several columns a day ranging over the minutiae of political movements; summaries of endless flows of bills, white papers, reports; comments on the Parliamentary situation and party matters; interpretations of front-bench speeches and questions as well as (what should be their main task) watching the development of policies and attitudes "behind the scenes." It grossly overburdens them, inevitably lessens the impact of their work, and gives them insufficient time for investigation or considered comment. The status of the "Political Correspondent," has been steadily reduced to that of a political reporter at the beck and call of his news-room. It is absurd, too, that the one man (even if now assisted by a deputy) should be expected to be an expert on all aspects of domestic policies, as well as to follow the party manoeuvring.

The real cause of the trouble, I believe, lies in this: neither newspaper offices, nor the Lobby, have adjusted themselves to the immense post-war expansion in the range of government activity. Not only has this grown but every department, as well as the political parties, has built up huge public relations departments to present its cases. Most seek to channel their efforts through the Lobby to ensure it being handled by politically experienced journalists. At the same time the vigour, and in some respects the importance, of the party battle and their internal affairs has grown. The party battle is followed in detail by the Lobby—but the Executive goes unwatched.

WHILE I BELIEVE that newspaper offices, the Lobby and individual journalists, as well as the attitudes that have grown up over the years, have all a part to play in affecting the quality of political reporting, the most important obstacle of all is far more deeply rooted and one which, whatever other mistakes he may have made, Mr. David Butler has put his finger on. It is the traditional lack of openness in British politics; the feeling that politics and government are a matter for the insiders and nothing to do with either the Press or public—except for the former to report faithfully what has been decided.

It is not, of course, only the Press that suffers this exclusiveness—as Iain Macleod's famous *Spectator* article on the Tory leadership struggle revealed, the "Magic Circle" kept its secrets even from many members of the Cabinet. But so far as the Press is concerned, this exclusiveness is fortified by two formidable weapons always at the disposal of the Executive: the Official Secrets Act and the rules of Parliamentary privilege—to say nothing of the ultimate weapon, the Tribunal of Inquiry.

No one who had any experience of the Vassall Tribunal two years ago could doubt that the Press, and not the incompetence that let yet another spy loose in Whitehall, was the primary target. I was subjected to hours of cross-examination by the Treasury solicitors in private and then by the then Attorney-General, Sir John Hobson, because I reported allegations that the fact that Vassall was known in Moscow as a homosexual had been reported on to his superiors in London and ignored there. At no time did Sir John or any of his minions seem to show the slightest signs that what really mattered was whether or not this was *true*—as indeed they must surely have known by that time and the Tribunal's report eventually showed. Instead their interest centred on who had told me—to reveal, I suppose, who it was who had helped to show up the incompetence of the machine his colleagues were supposed to be running. Sir John Hobson, a member of a Government that had made more use than any other administration of the Lobby and its conventions, even had the audacity to ask that I should be directed to disclose my sources.

I have no doubt at all that the existence of these powers—the Official Secrets Act, Parliamentary privilege and the Tribunal of Inquiry—however rarely they may be invoked, limit the free flow of well-informed news and comment, and inhibit the political journalist. The Official Secrets Act can, if authority so desires, be interpreted to cover virtually everything that is said or done within the government service. It provides a wall which protects Whitehall from probing inquiry and critical analysis. Formal rules, as well as ministerial responsibility, restrict communication between civil servants and the Press. It is slightly anomalous that the journalist can discuss policy freely with an official of a nationalised industry—whose impact on the economy may be far greater than his opposite number in the civil service—yet he may have only the most limited and unofficial contact with the civil servant!

THE WORST FEATURES of the Official Secrets Act are its blanket nature and the fact that the use of its powers is wholly at the discretion of the Executive—with the journalist virtually defenceless if they are exercised. The "leaking" of Cabinet decisions is now a routine public relations exercise in Whitehall in order to prepare public opinion or stimulate discussion in advance of the formal announcement; but an

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embarrassing leakage could lead to the Act being invoked, as I believe happened at least once between the wars—until it was discovered that a Minister had done the talking. Mr. Randolph Churchill boasts, in his book last year on the Tory leadership struggle, of having seen the Cabinet paper in which Mr. Macmillan laid down how his successor was to be chosen; and he gives a full summary of it. I often wonder whether such a considerate view would have been taken of this by the Government had the book caused "offence"? This incident is also a curious commentary on the difficulties that genuine historians have in seeing ministerial papers covered by the 50-year-rule. Miss Barbara Fell, it will be recalled, received two years' jail for disclosing Central Office of Information briefing material which no one even attempted to argue had the slightest security value—indeed one had already been published. However foolish her behaviour may have been, the prosecution seemed to have a wider purpose than discouraging female foolishness.

Parliamentary privilege is an obstacle in another sort of way. Discussion by the Press of the proceedings of a Select Committee could expose the writer to a charge of "breach of privilege," however appropriate the subject might be for public discussion. Consideration was, for example, given to such action following an account of a development in the Committee on Lords reform. Of greater importance is the inhibiting effect it has on Ministers who face complaints from the House if they give information—and this is frequently extended to indications of general policy—to the Press before announcing it to Parliament. The House is properly jealous of its rights and suspicious of anything that would appear to derogate from its authority or indicate lack of respect by the Executive. But one cannot help feeling that its hyper-sensitivity provides the Executive with a valuable shield.

Is this merely a matter of satisfying journalistic curiosity? Is it not imperative to a well-informed democracy that as much as possible should be known of what is being thought and planned in its name? The interaction of comment and discussion is as valuable to the leaders as to those being led. This point is well argued by the Fabian Group, writing from the viewpoint of enlightened civil servants, who prepared the recent pamphlet, *The Administrators*. They also point out the excessive extent to which secrecy is imposed on government actions:

> Secrecy is an obstacle to good policy-making when it prevents the tapping of a sufficiently wide range of expert opinion and advice and when it narrows public discussion of policy issues. . . .
>
> In the fields of defence and foreign policy, secrecy mainly depends on considerations of national security. In the field of economic policy the practice of secrecy seems mainly to stem from the tradition that Parliament should be told things before the public. But this should apply only to policy decisions and to statements and statistics (such as budget accounts) of immediate topical relevance.
>
> There seems to be no good reason why it should inhibit the release of information or the stimulation of discussion and work in the earlier stages of planning and policy-making. The danger is that secrecy, for whatever reason it starts, becomes a habit. It becomes an excuse for preventing others from looking over your shoulder and a way of avoiding "trouble" and escaping post-mortems.

The same argument applies to party policy-making. It is, for example, difficult to see the justification for the wall of secrecy Mr. Edward Heath has put round the Conservative policy review, to the point of refusing even to name the politicians on his various groups. It is also true of the weekly meetings at Westminster of the Conservative and Labour Parliamentary parties and their policy committees. Much of the time of Lobby Correspondents is spent trying to establish what has gone on, particularly when a controversial issue has been under discussion, and a rather ridiculous cat-and-mouse exercise is played in the corridors of Westminster between journalist and politician, the former seeking to piece it together from hints and leaks, the latter sometimes "leaking" with a heavy emphasis on the view he happens to hold.

The attempts at secrecy usually either fail because of the skill of the Lobby men or are self-defeating. If, as is often alleged, the reports that do appear are selective or distorted—and personally I believe they usually present a fair picture of the stresses in a party—it is because secrecy plays into the hands of those with an axe to grind and an interest in ensuring that a particular point of view is publicised. The journalist, pressed by edition times, has inevitably to rely on a few hasty contacts.

Many politicians will argue, of course, that these meetings are "private affairs" and that the Press has no right to inquire into them. But this is to ignore the fact that they are concerned with public policy on which party attitudes may have the most profound effects—far more so than the subsequent debates on the floor of the House. The public has the right to know. Obviously there are some matters which the parties will want to discuss in private and to open the committees to the Press would simply lead to the discussions being transferred elsewhere. But

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far more could be done openly. What is really wrong is that so much debate has been removed from the floor of the House to secret enclaves.

THE FUNDAMENTAL SOLUTION must lie in breaking down the barriers that surround Government and the parties. In part this is a matter of changing attitudes as well as modifying the legal barriers. I believe that in the Conservative Party changes are coming as the old exclusive caste system breaks down: younger Conservative M.P.s are undoubtedly more open in their attitudes, more willing to discuss issues, more aware that the public has a right to share in policy-making. Within the government machine itself I think changes are coming—the influx of advisers brought in at high levels from industry and the professions since October has introduced a leavening of men less inhibited than the traditional civil servant. Among the younger generation of civil servants, too, one detects the feeling that freer interchange of opinions and thinking would be of benefit to all.

The impetus, of course, must come at ministerial level and here, again, the impact of a Labour government, with the party's more open tradition—the natural corollary, perhaps, of being a crusading movement—is beneficial. The political journalist undoubtedly finds greater ease of access to Ministers and more readiness to discuss issues and thinking. The Prime Minister—partly because he is the first occupant of 10 Downing Street ever to show any signs of understanding the Press and of knowing those who work for it—has had much greater personal contact, largely through the Lobby, than any of his predecessors. The tradition that the Prime Minister is an aloof, distant figure (Clement Attlee as much as any Tory) has ended and can probably never again return in quite the same degree.

It would be naïve to imagine that Mr. Wilson does it from pure altruism (as naïve as Mr. David Butler's apparent belief that state secrets pour out across the dinner tables in Washington for uninhibited reproduction in next day's press—President Kennedy's famous dispute with the *New York Herald Tribune* should dispose of that notion). All politicians wish to project themselves and their policies in the most favourable light: the task of the Press is to submit them to critical examination. But the readiness of Mr. Wilson to take part in this process personally can only be welcomed provided that political journalists do not allow themselves to be dazzled by the novelty of it.

The breaking down of the barriers can only be a gradual process encouraged by the pressure of public opinion through the Press. It is, perhaps, beginning to dawn on politicians that it is of benefit to them too, for secrecy breeds distortion. There is constant contrast between the pretence of a Government that it is a monolithic whole, always in absolute unison, and of the Press presenting what it discovers of differences of opinion in terms of personal clashes. A recent case in point is the so-called "Brown-Callaghan clash" over the shape of the Budget. Had more been known of the real nature of the different interpretations of the economic trends in the two departments, a more intelligent discussion might have taken place, not least to the benefit of the public which has to bear the consequences of the policies.

The Press has a part to play, too, in its treatment of political news, its willingness to present ideas and thinking in less vivid terms. But the real problem for the Press is how to organise itself in such a way as to ensure that it is properly equipped to keep the Government under constant, well-informed scrutiny. It has broken down partly because the centre of power has moved from Westminster to Whitehall (something politicians themselves have the duty to rectify) while the Lobby remains the prime channel of political news. The Lobby is still basically geared to the more limited scope of pre-war government, it is overstretched, and its authority and status reduced—although, incidentally, many of its members are of far higher calibre and education than their pre-war counterparts.

THE SOLUTION advocated by some is greater specialisation. Mr. David Butler, for example, advocates a corps of journalists attached to each department and virtually, as in America, living in it. This already exists to some extent. There are now special writers on economics, defence, science, the Commonwealth, education, the Common Market (when the negotiations were on), in addition to the older specialised groups. It has, however, one grave disadvantage. It places the correspondent in the hands of one department, making him wholly dependent on one source for his news, and it can assist the process of "news management"; one already finds departments refusing to discuss matters with other than their accredited specialist. Another drawback is that it inevitably attracts the enthusiast who can become so emotionally involved with his subject that his critical faculties are blunted (a great advantage of the Lobby is that its members are not so personally involved). Not least of the reasons, I believe, for the shock the nation suffered from the collapse of the Common Market negotiations was that so many of the correspondents in Brussels believed they should and would succeed that they closed their

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minds (and their reports) to the possibility of failure.

Nonetheless, it is obviously true that greater specialisation is inevitable and necessary, and there are many distinguished specialist writers who avoid these pitfalls. Much depends, obviously, on their calibre and the standing they have. But the danger is there, and many are aware of it. There are two further difficulties: specialists are not always equipped to see the political implications of an issue and, more important, there is the risk of fragmenting the front that Fleet Street, or the individual paper, can present to the massive machinery of modern government. Logic might suggest specialisation, with the Lobby increasingly confined to the political battles at Westminster. But this, I think, would weaken rather than strengthen.

The *Sunday Times*' appointment of a "Whitehall correspondent" seems at first sight an important move both to cover Whitehall more comprehensively and also to avoid the dangers of over-specialisation. But it implies a separation of Whitehall from Westminster which is wrong. Nor could anything be more calculated to stiffen the barriers than the idea of appointing a journalist specially to cover civil servants and report their gossip. Nor am I impressed by what I call the "H.P. Sauce" school of political journalism (exemplified by *The Making of the Prime Minister*), the attempt to create the impression of "being on the inside" by highlighting trivia, often at second hand.

I believe, instead, that each paper has got to unify and plan comprehensively its assault on the Executive, as is the practice in America where, for example, I believe Mr. James Reston of the *New York Times* has a team of twenty-eight working with him. The senior political writer must have the authority and status that his position justifies, with a foot in Westminster as well as Whitehall, directing the political coverage (in the widest sense) of his paper and also writing himself and dealing with the major policy issues.

THIS SUGGESTS an end of the Lobby system as we now know it, or at least a merging of it in a bigger whole rather than retaining its monopoly. It would remain to review the important day-to-day routine of Westminster and to cover the party controversies. I would like to see the senior political writer on each paper retaining the right as a Lobby Correspondent of access to Members at Westminster, but no longer based there; concerned with top level policy and less with routine reporting; commanding greater respect than he now does. In his office he should be the head—the political editor—of a team coordinating the various writers covering Whitehall and Westminster, and only writing on major themes and issues from a position of authority.

Whatever arguments there may be about the precise form, the purpose must be clear: to enable the Press to match, in its coverage of politics and government, the scale of modern government. Organisation, calibre, status, and strength of staff are all involved in this. It must resist the cosy conventions, the easy devices of collective news-gathering, and other comfortable arrangements. It must challenge the atmosphere of secrecy that surrounds our public life, the desire to keep so much either "off the record" or "just for background guidance"—devices which, valuable and essential as they are in many ways, enable the politician to avoid controversy and weaken democracy because they reduce informed public participation. Politicians must accept the need to get out into the open. The "closed shop" mentality must go.

Ian Waller

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EAST & WEST

Moscow Summer, Belgrade Winter

The Case of Mihajlo Mihajlov

WAS IT MERE COINCIDENCE—or fitting irony—that on the same weekend Leonid Ilichev was removed in Moscow, Belgrade announced the indictment of Mihajlo Mihajlov?

Ilichev was, of course, the sullen scourge of Russia's young poets, modern artists and anti-Stalinist intellectuals in the last years of Khrushchev. Mihajlov is the young Yugoslav scholar, whose *Moscow Summer 1964*, appearing in the Belgrade monthly *Delo* last January and February, confidently heralded the coming of a "new 1956" in Soviet life and letters. He has now been sentenced to nine months' imprisonment for "offence to a foreign state"—the U.S.S.R.—and for mailing his manuscript abroad after *Delo* had been banned.

Can it be that Tito has offered this young Yugoslav intellectual as a sacrifice to Moscow—just when Moscow itself seems on the eve of a new period of intellectual liberalisation? Certainly it would not be the first time that the old Marshal had misjudged the necessities of his relationship to the Kremlin. In October 1956, he welcomed Erno Gerö in Belgrade on the eve of the Hungarian Revolution. A few months later, the Yugoslav Embassy in Budapest turned over Imre Nagy to the Soviet KGB (security police). In October 1957, Tito sought to accommodate Khrushchev by recognising East Germany—only to have the Moscow Conference of the 12 ruling Communist parties, a month later, denounce Yugoslav "revisionism." Again, at the 1960 ("shoe-pounding") session of the United Nations General Assembly, Tito made new overtures to Khrushchev—and a few weeks later the Moscow Conference of the "81" condemned Yugoslavia, even more sharply, as a "Trojan Horse" and the "main danger." Just this winter, after Tito had hastened to take up "Khrushchev's failures and mistakes," the otherwise futile Moscow Conference of the "19" did agree to urge a new meeting of the "81" (Albania in, Yugoslavia out) "in the spirit of the 1957 and 1960 declarations."

The intricate relations between Tito and Khrushchev over a decade will certainly offer historians a challenging theme—although, given the character of both men and of their systems, only a small part of the evidence is likely to be available. On the public record, of course, is a substantial change in the Titoist view of the world: 1953, two regrettable and hostile military blocs, although the West's was "essentially defensive;" 1965, American "aggressors" on one side, Chinese dogmatists on the other, "socialist countries and non-aligned forces struggling for peace" in between.

There is, also, the "normalisation" of Yugoslav-Soviet relations. But what is "normal" between these two? Do the Soviet MIGs which appeared in the 1964 Belgrade May Day parade (having already been spotted by Western attachés) represent a large or only a small part of Soviet-Yugoslav military commerce? When the chiefs of the Yugoslav security service went to Moscow to "exchange experiences" with their counterparts, were they only discussing (as the communiqué said) traffic control and fire-fighting? If so, how is one to interpret the experience of the American writer who "lost" an address-book at the Hotel Metropol in Belgrade, only to have it "returned" three weeks later at a KGB interrogation in Moscow?

Obviously the old Western view of Tito as a great "liberalising" influence on Russia bears some re-examination. Certainly most ordinary Yugoslavs have always felt that the state of their own freedom depends directly on the political and ideological distance they can put between themselves and the U.S.S.R.

Milovan Djilas was among the first to recognise this, and his own experience is a case in point. His initial rebellion and expulsion from the leadership (1953–54) coincided with Tito's first attempts to re-establish links with Moscow. He was imprisoned for hailing the Hungarian Revolution and criticising the Yugoslav ambiguity towards Soviet intervention. He was paroled after the condemnation of Tito by the Moscow "81". He was jailed again (April 1962) on the eve of Gromyko's arrival in Belgrade—for *Conversations with Stalin*, an implicit warning against the newest "*rapprochement*."

TITO'S CURRENT DIFFICULTIES with Yugoslav intellectuals may be properly said to have started with his visit to the Soviet Union in December 1962. The visit coincided with the Khrushchev-Ilichev campaign against Russian intellectuals, and Tito was quick to provide an echo. In a New Year's message for 1963, he declared:

ANATOLE SHUB's *first "Letter from Belgrade" was published in* ENCOUNTER, *May 1964. He is the Central European correspondent of the* Washington Post *and attended the Mihajlov trial in Zadar.*

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> The situation in our cultural and moral-political life is not as we should like it to be.... Especially in literature and in art generally, there is much that is alien and incompatible with our socialist ethic, much that tries to turn the course of our development from the line defined by our Revolution into another direction. There are various decadent phenomena introduced from outside. We must fight against them, not always administratively but with political work....

In a speech to the People's Youth Congress on January 21st, Tito continued:

> I had in mind that very small number of barren intellectuals who, especially in the fields of literature, painting, the film and elsewhere, hover somewhere outside our socialist reality and are, in the main, the carriers of negative influences from abroad.... They show no interest in anything but their own thoughts. They do not view matters critically, but criticise events in our social life. For them, Marxism is outdated. They want something "new."... They get excited about foreign, decadent art and literature....
>
> I have spoken about all this several times, and I think that there has been enough talk about it and that it is now time to turn to deeds....

Obviously, some of Tito's colleagues thought that the talk had been altogether insufficient and one-sided. On February 6th, the Marshal received the Executive Committee of the Yugoslav Press Association and delivered another lecture, which was published eight days later:

> Some people have shouted loudly against me over what I said about culture.... They say: Tito knows how to conduct politics well enough, but he is not competent to deal with cultural affairs. Comrades, those who say such things do not grasp what a Communist party is, what socialism is, or what communism is. I am not only responsible for industrialisation and agriculture, but I am also responsible for culture itself.... As General Secretary of the Party, I am responsible before both history and the people for a correct course in our country's development. Therefore, such people should grasp and remember that it cannot be otherwise. Moreover, as an average man who looks at art, I can know what is good and what is not. I cannot grant that something is good if it is not.

Cooler heads—and the emptiness of a number of leading galleries—ultimately persuaded Tito to leave the abstract artists alone. But publishing and cultural enterprises were "reorganised," the play *The Centaurs* (half-men, half-beasts!) was banned from the repertory of Belgrade's Studio 212, and the bright cultural fortnightly *Danas* (Today) was closed down. Later in the year, there came the banning of the neo-realistic film *Grad* (The City) and the novel *Cangi*.[1]

LAST JUNE, the "*Perspektive* affair" erupted in Ljubljana. For some time the press in Slovenia had been permitted more freedom than elsewhere in the country—partly because the Slovenian language is impenetrable to most Belgrade officials (as well as to foreign diplomats and journalists). Two Slovenian cultural reviews (*Revija 57* and *Beseda*) had been suppressed, but in their place had arisen *Perspektive*, which had attained considerable popularity among the students at Ljubljana University.

According to party critics later, *Perspektive* "identified the Yugoslav Marxist idea with its Stalinistic deformation, with bureaucratic dogmatism." *Perspektive* in its own words spoke of Communism as "violent, aimless encroachment on the tradition of Slovenian culture, of foreign ideas, criteria and values, which were imported and, regardless of the degree of our development, primitive... which hindered the growth of a whole series of cultural categories (philosophy, sociology, law, political science, etc.) and caused the impoverishment of the already underdeveloped Slovenian culture."

The goal of Communism *Perspektive* saw as a myth of "paradise on earth... which bears all the characteristics of God's absolutism... identical with living in heaven after the Last Judgment." The League of Communists, *Perspektive* said, was "the political force of administrative socialism," which was "accustomed to claim absolute initiative and control," sought to "prevent every concrete treatment of negative phenomena," and made "impossible the spontaneous growth of social relations."

The inevitable conclusion, drawn by *Perspektive* editor Veljko Rus (literally: Great Russian!): "If the elimination of existing antagonisms is unreal, then the participation-democracy, based on collaboration, is also illusory. In that event, genuine democratisation is possible only through the institutionalisation of opposition tendencies." Thus, ten years after Djilas' apostasy, Yugoslavia was back to the demand for "bourgeois" democracy, for an opposition party.

The demand was no more agreeable to the authorities in 1964 than in 1954. *Perspektive* was suppressed, and two editors, Tomaz Salamun and Joze Rucnik, jailed. For nearly a month the question in Ljubljana was: "Are you for *Perspektive* or for the police régime?" The chairman of the university students' union declared at an open meeting that the abolition of *Perspektive*, as well as "police interference in the editing of the student paper *Tribuna*," had "revolted the students." An open manifesto of protest was signed by 85 leading Slovene writers, poets,

[1] See "Letter from Belgrade," ENCOUNTER, May 1964. The film has never been released, though protests prevented it from being burned. The novel is now being "revised."

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critics and scientists. The imprisoned editors were released.

Later, the review *Sobodnost* (Contemporary) —with which many of *Perspektive's* defenders were associated—was quietly purged. By that time, however, a new monthly in Zagreb, *Praxis*, was already discussing the libertarian side of Marx, "alienation under socialism," the need for radical criticism....

THE EIGHTH PARTY CONGRESS which met last December in Belgrade (the first Congress in nearly seven years) proved to be as divided over the intellectual challenge as it was over Yugoslavia's economic troubles. "Marko" Rankovic declared that "first of all we must settle" with the "various demagogues, who are raising their voices with increasing insolence, allegedly on behalf of the working man... various petty-bourgeois, self-styled 'champions of freedom.'"

Veljko Vlahovic, on the other hand, appealed for a "much greater clash of ideas in the future within the League of Communists."

> To-day, ideological problems arise more from the real lack of respect for the equality of citizens, the real privileges, the real violation of self-governing and other rights of working people, the real irresponsibility of individual Communists, the real waste of the resources of our society etc., than they do from any kind of theoretical concepts, ideological postulates and alien influences.

An eloquent peroration: except that (as a senior Balkan correspondent, Eric Bourne, instantly recalled) an identical appeal, in virtually the same words, had been made at the Sixth Congress in 1952 by Djilas.

MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV was born September 26, 1934 in Pancevo, an old "Austrian" town on the left bank of the Danube opposite Belgrade. His parents, like tens of thousands of other Russians, had emigrated to Yugoslavia

Students

Moscow's *Lomonosov State University.... The building is a worthy monument to the time of the "cult," in the same style as the Palace of Culture in Warsaw. A non-functional, mammoth building with a spire of about 30 metres and a huge star on top.... The basic feeling one gets looking at it is a feeling of impotence and one's own small stature. In Italy I had seen greater skyscrapers but they did not emanate menace....*

The students are in no way different from Yugoslav students. Except that instead of delivering milk bottles they work as stokers and night watchmen. Everyone does as best he can....

The students, in spite of constant fear of being sent to the so-called "work colonies" for a year or two, don't seem to fear anything....I was surprised that no one paid attention to groups singing prison songs on the stairs. Through the foreign students (there are about a thousand of them), the foreign press finds its way in here, as well as books and records....

I have met young and unknown poets, admirers of Andrei Bely, who has still not seen a second edition; admirers of abstractions by Malevich; I have talked to students who know a lot about Kafka, and have even seen some who admired Nabokov's Lolita. *There was only one thing I did not come across at the university—I met no one who was an admirer of dogmatic socialist realism.*

Dudintsev

Recalling the hue and cry of 1956, the writer said that the greatest feeling was when unknown people, standing beside him in trams and trolley-buses, or in the underground, used to squeeze his hand stealthily without looking into his eyes. "For that sort of thing," he said, "it is worth while enduring anything."

At Novy Mir

I visited one of the editors of the most representative Soviet literary magazine, Novy Mir, *V. I. Lakshin, in his office....Lakshin attained wide popularity only this year with his long and significant essay* "Ivan Denisovich, *His Friends and Enemies," in which he brilliantly defended Solzhenitsyn from numerous attacks....*

After Lakshin's essay on Solzhenitsyn, and the clamour raised afterwards, the young critic received up to 150 letters a day in which he was praised for his courage. To the question as to why he did not publish these letters, the critic answered that the editors of the magazine did not intend to confine the polemic to Solzhenitsyn. "Whenever we are attacked," he said, "instead of defending ourselves, we publish something even fiercer, so that the polemic is constantly veering from one subject to another."

One fact with which he made me familiar is quite characteristic—that the question has has become proverbial in the U.S.S.R.: "Tell me what you think of Ivan Denisovich *and I shall tell you who you are."*

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during the famine after the Civil War. The father (later an active Partisan and for years a director of the Yugoslav Scientific Institute) was 17 years old at the time, the mother 7.

Mihajlov attended schools in Zrenjanin (Yugoslav Banat) and Sarajevo (Bosnia) and the universities at Belgrade and Zagreb. He served in the Yugoslav Army and in the "youth brigades" building the Yugoslav *Autoput*. He was a university lecturer in Slavic Languages and Literatures, Faculty of Philosophy, at the Zadar (central Dalmatia) branch of Zagreb University, which is Yugoslavia's oldest.

Mihajlov is a Dostoevsky scholar, but he also took an increasing interest in contemporary Soviet literature, particularly as it began to shed the inhibitions of Stalinism. He lectured frequently over the Yugoslav radio as well as before Zagreb and Zadar university audiences. He contributed to a dozen leading papers and reviews in Zagreb, Novi Sad, and Belgrade (including the ill-fated *Danas*). In the June 1964 issue of *Forum*, the magazine of the Yugoslav Academy of Sciences and Arts,[2] he compared "Dostoevsky's *House of the Dead* and Solzhenitsyn." The article concluded with a lengthy review of the history of death camps, which, Mihajlov said, began with the British during the Boer War. Mihajlov cited original Soviet sources as well as International Red Cross reports to document the existence of forced-labour and death camps under Lenin. He compared statistics of Tsarist and Soviet penal colonies (31,000 exiles in 1912 compared with millions under Stalin) as well as the conditions in Tsarist exile "sanatoria" as against Soviet camps. The subject was in fact treated in considerable detail; there were no political repercussions.

Mihajlov's first contribution to *Delo*, also last year, was an essay, "The Mission of the Periodical *Novy Mir*," in which he argued that "the forces of the Russian renaissance are so strong that every attempt to retard the current development is only a hopeless attempt aimed at turning back the clock of history."

Before travelling to Russia last July (under the Soviet-Yugoslav Cultural Exchange Agreement for 1964), Mihajlov wrote a three-part essay for the Serbian monthly *Kolo*, on the theme of "Dostoevsky Today." The third part was never published, and the editor of *Kolo*, Sasa Veres, was in fact dismissed last winter for having permitted publication of the first two instalments. In this article, Mihajlov later disclosed, "I had the 'audacity' to reveal the heretical thought that even Christianity as a religion of freedom could form the basis for a proper ordering of society in this country, and not the so-called 'natural laws of development' on which the theory of 'scientific' socialism is based.... Of course I did not mean any particular church by the word Christianity."

Mihajlov wrote *Moscow Summer* last October, and submitted it at first to *Letopis Matica Srpska* in Novi Sad, a magazine of rich traditions in Serbian history. The editors replied that they could not accept it at this time, so soon after articles on "similar themes" in Poland and Hungary, with which they had had "enough troubles."

Mihajlov then applied to *Forum*, which held the manuscript two months, meanwhile advising the author to be "patient." He had, however, submitted it to *Delo* while waiting, and that magazine's co-editor, Milosav Mirkovic, accepted it. (In a postcard, Mirkovic wrote Mihajlov: "It is extremely interesting although partially very tough.") *Delo*, it was later pointed out, had its own score to settle: its editors had entertained a Soviet writer, Valeri Ozerov, in 1962, who on his return to Moscow had written a bitter Stalinist attack on *Delo*, *Danas*, and other Yugoslav publications.

Moscow Summer achieved world-wide publicity because of its sensational (for Yugoslavia) discussion of Soviet concentration camps [see Box, "The Camps"]. However, it is primarily a *literary* travelogue, and as such of absorbing cultural interest.

In the course of a month in Moscow and Leningrad, Mihajlov met and spoke with the novelists Vladimir Dudintsev, Leonid Leonov, Yuri Bondarev, and Vladimir Tendryakov; the poets Bulat Okudzhava, Evgeni Vinokurov, Bella Akhmadulina, and Tamara Zhirmunskaya; the poet and aesthetician Victor Shklovski; Ilya Ehrenburg; the old Moscow University literary historians Nikolai Gondzi and Boris Mikhailovski and the young critic Vladimir Turbin; the young deputy editor of *Novy Mir*, V. I. Lakshin; and others, including many students at Moscow and Leningrad Universities.

In recounting his conversations (and arguments), Mihajlov provides a dense review of developments in Soviet culture. Not merely does he discuss the works—recent and in progress—of the writers he has interviewed. He finds time to evaluate Konstantin Simonov's new "Stalin" novel *Soldiers Are Not Born*, General A. V.

[2] Yugoslav scholars have several academies: a Serbian Academy in Belgrade, a Slovenian Academy in Ljubljana, and so on. The Yugoslav Academy at Zagreb was the first of them, founded a century ago by the legendary Archbishop Strossmayer. The editor of *Forum* is the celebrated novelist, and pre-war Communist, Miroslav Krleza—himself the author of a celebrated (and critical) Russian travelogue first published in 1924 and republished after Tito's quarrel with Khrushchev in 1958.

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Gorbatov's concentration-camp memoirs, Oles Gonchar's Lenin Prize novel, *Tronka*, M. Zhestov's novel on collectivisation, *Tatyana Tarhanouva*, the dramas of the late Evgeni Schwartz, the tales of Alexander Grin, critical works on Dostoevsky and Kafka. He also reproduces poems by Vinokurov, ballads by Okudzhava, songs of the concentration camps. He recounts such episodes as the fate of two independent Dostoevsky scholars, M. M. Bakhtin and Yakov Golosovker, the former sent to teach in Sarinsk, Moldavia, the latter living in Moscow seclusion after five years in a concentration camp; the banning in 1961 of the collection *Taruskie Stranitsi* (containing works by Paustovsky, Okudzhava, Tsvetayeva, and others); the manner in which the League of Soviet Writers answers "No" on Okudzhava's

The Camps

"About *Soviet concentration camps people will write for another 80 years." Leonov was right. The theme of camps has just entered Russian literature. A year ago, Khrushchev said that the editorial boards of literary gazettes had received about 10,000 novels, short stories and memoirs about life in the camps; and this is no exaggeration, since it is estimated that in the course of three decades, some 8–12 million people were deported to various camps. Even though only very few texts of this total were eventually published ("since we must be very careful," said Khrushchev), Soviet magazines now remind one more and more of the annals of 'the misdeeds committed under the Inquisition of Philip II.*

The majority of people who were rehabilitated, and who were lucky enough to live long enough to survive until 1956–7 and be allowed to leave the camp, do not want to keep silent now. Thus, the Soviet authorities are now confronted by only two alternatives: either to send all the released deportees back to the camps (an action which Khrushchev neither wants nor can undertake any longer), or to allow them to speak freely. The latter alternative is now being implemented....

This open exposition of the truth about dozens of years of the cruel rule of Stalinism, and the tragedy of the Russian and other Soviet peoples, poses a problem which is still not talked about in public. It is a question of the people who actively fought against Stalinism before 1956, and told the truth about the situation in the Soviet Union. These people are still considered criminals and "traitors," although everything that they wrote in the past about the U.S.S.R. could now be published in Soviet magazines....

Thus, in the U.S.S.R. today an ambiguous attitude prevails both with regard to Stalinism and to the fighters against Stalinism. On the one hand, Stalinism is being condemned and proclaimed anti-national and criminal, while on the other hand anti-Stalinists are also being condemned. Sooner or later this abnormal situation must be resolved....

It is symptomatic that the Soviet press writes about and refers to Fascism and Nazi camps to an ever smaller degree, and also avoids comparisons between Nazi and Soviet concentration camps.

It is even understandable. The first "death camps" were not really established by the Germans, since they were founded by the Soviets. In 1921, in the vicinity of Archangel, the first death camp, known as Homogor, was formed with the sole purpose of physically exterminating the prisoners; this camp functioned successfully for many years, and swallowed up former allies—members of the non-Bolshevik revolutionary parties (Socialist Revolutionaries, Mensheviks, etc.). The writer Ivan Shmeliov, who lives abroad and was recently rehabilitated in the Soviet Union, deals in his famous book The Sun of the Dead *(preface by Thomas Mann) with the frightful years after the civil war, when in 1920–21 only, some 120,000 men and women were shot in the Crimea without a trial....*

Even with regard to genocide, Hitler was not the first to introduce it. On the eve of World War II, many small peoples from the border areas in the vicinity of Turkey, Iraq and Persia, were deported to northern Siberia where, unused to the cold weather, they died in scores. It is therefore fully understandable that, during World War II, many units of the Red Army, composed of Kalmyks, Tatars, Cherkesses and other peoples who had been exposed to rude reprisals, escaped to the side of Hitler's criminals. For the same reason Cossacks from the Don area in large numbers escaped to the side of the Germans, so that the formation of the anti-Soviet Cossack army of General Vlasov, i.e., *the Russian Liberation Army, is an exceptional event in the history of the Russian people. For more than 300 years, the Cossacks had been in fact the firmest foundation stone of the Russian state and the best guarantee of defence against any enemy....*

Furthermore, there is also the problem of Partisan movements in the occupied territory which fought at one and the same time against the Germans and against the Red Army, and thus constituted a "third force." There is no doubt at all that very shortly the history of the Second World War will have to be revised fundamentally.

From *Moscow Summer 1964* by Mihajlo Mihajlov.

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behalf when the poet is invited to Poland or Czechoslovakia; the fact that Dudintsev's *Not by Bread Alone* was published in an edition of only 30,000 copies, that his foreign royalties are withheld by *Mezhdunarodnaya Kniga*, and that the author makes ends meet by translating from Ukrainian. Almost *en passant*, Mihajlov gives a running survey of what has been playing in Moscow theatres and movie-houses, and of which Western and *émigré* writers have and have not yet been rehabilitated.

To be sure, the account is peppered with irreverent remarks about the queues at the Lenin Mausoleum (open only three hours a day, and not every day), the dullness of Soviet newspapers, the staleness of the Moscow Art Theatre, Sholokhov ("only a monument now"), the young girls in Moscow's 40 open churches, the Lenin cult ("strange, the way people do not notice that things frequently repeated lose their meaning").

Yet none of this should have, by itself, caused the political reaction which it did. After all, the first part of Mihajlov's report passed without incident. It contained most of the irreverent remarks cited above, the shattering tale of Nikolai Gumilov (Anna Akhmatova's husband, shot in 1921 despite Lenin's promise to spare him), as well as the now-famous predictions that "another 1956 is coming" and that "the day is not far off when the Union of Soviet Writers will merge with the Russian Writers' Union in Paris, presided over by the famous fiction-writer Boris Zaitsev." It also contained the incisive quotation from Evgeni Zamyatin (1921) which, in effect, serves as a motto for Mihajlov's entire essay:

> Real literature can be found only where it is created not by careful and reliable clerks but ruthless men, hermits, heretics, dreamers, rebels, sceptics. And if a writer must be loyal, must be a faithful Catholic, cannot spite everyone as Swift did, or ridicule everything like Anatole France, then there is no metal-hard literature; then there is only paper literature, newspaper literature which is read today and in which soap will be wrapped tomorrow.... I fear that we will have no real literature so long as we fail to get cured of this sort of new Catholicism which, no less than the old, dreads heretical words. And if this illness is incurable—I fear that Russian literature has only one future: its past.

One may never know which portions of the second instalment caused Tito and his associates to react so sharply. One should not assume automatically that the offending section was the description of Stalinist concentration camps; a great deal of material on the subject was in fact published in Yugoslavia in 1948–53. Nor should Belgrade have been unduly alarmed by the sympathy shown to heretical Soviet writers; *Dr. Zhivago* had been published too.

The songs of the camp prisoners (which Mihajlov calls "the most significant folk art of our time") and the ballads of Okudzhava are, perhaps, another matter. For in discussing them Mihajlov does not conceal his conviction that they represent the eternal Russia, "the country we know from the works of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky." The prison songs, he writes, "will be sung, there is no doubt, for yet another century, the way Russian prison songs from the last century are still being sung to-day.... The songs of the Russian people will be heard whether they will be written about in the U.S.S.R. or simply hushed up." As for the heroes of Okudzhava's ballads, "they could agree with the words of Schweik (in Brecht's play, *Schweik in the Second World War*), who answers the tirade on 'the great historical epoch in which we are living' with the words 'I piss on this great epoch.'"

It is, perhaps, Mihajlov's confidence in the future that would be most disturbing to someone who still believes, as does Tito, in "great October" and the "first land of victorious socialism." Throughout the essay there is a youthful optimism that the worst is over in the Soviet Union, that the former prisoners and the young poets will prevail, that the great Russian tradition has survived, and that (quoting Mayakovsky)

> *There arises from the dim reaches of time,*
> *A different,*
> *a Third Revolution—*
> *The Revolution of the spirit!*

Mihajlov's second article in *Delo* appeared in the first week of February and was reported by Western correspondents at the end of the week. On February 11th, Tito received a delegation of state prosecutors and declared:

> You see what happened with that article in *Delo*? The public prosecutor ought to have banned it straight away, and made the decision known in public.... You ought to have instituted proceedings immediately against the person who wrote that article, and published your decision in the press. It was necessary to know that an indictment had been raised against him, that he was a reactionary who slandered a great event —the October Revolution....
>
> It is really strange that such things are happening to us when we have organs of management both in the collectives of newspaper boards and in printing offices....
>
> Likewise, we must not permit instances of anyone in our socialist country defending Hitler's concentration camps, where living men were burned to death, where millions and tens of

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millions of people, children and old men alike, were destroyed....

There have been other examples of the same kind. In such matters, you must take action immediately and energetically....

It is not only *Perspektive* from Slovenia which is in question here. We have such examples also in Zagreb, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Sarajevo, everywhere. I ask myself whether there is some sort of organisation.[3] It is interesting that they are working, so to say, concertedly and very skilfully, propagating distorted concepts in the press and in various other ways. It seems to me that this tendency, which we used to call Djilasism, is now assuming a new form. As I have said, this is being propagated particularly in the press, and this is very dangerous.

The same day, a Belgrade court issued the necessary injunction, *Delo* was banned, and more than 1,000 copies of the magazine were seized. A fairly calm criticism of Mihajlov in the party weekly *Komunist*, by Miodrag Bogicevic, was supplemented—evidently at the last moment—by a strong editorial note to the effect that "one cannot tolerate essentially anti-socialist outbursts, made under the guise of a struggle of opinions and of freedom of discussion." Mirkovic was dismissed from *Delo* and reprimanded by his party cell.

Yet after this—for more than two weeks—nothing happened. There were the usual rumours of a "major struggle" in the party high command. Then, on February 27th, Marshal Tito received the Soviet Ambassador, Alexander Mikhailovich Puzanov. Other Communist diplomats report that the Ambassador presented Tito with a note from Moscow, which they describe as "a veritable cannonade." Puzanov, cornered at a reception, would neither confirm nor deny the existence of the note; he stressed instead that "I have made no *personal* protest."

The next day, the Belgrade weekly *Nin* printed a long, unsigned attack on Mihajlov as a "White Russian *revanchist* and interventionist." His articles, *Nin* said, "have the mouldy smell of long-digested nastiness from the White-Russian kitchen... malicious claptrap."

Mihajlov sought to reply. In a covering note to *Nin*'s editor, Risto Tosovic, he recalled the fate of his *Kolo* articles, called the banning of the February *Delo* an "open case of the recurrence of Zhdanovism in our country," but still reiterated his belief that "Yugoslavia is the most democratic of all the socialist countries." In the letter itself, Mihajlov declared:

[3] Tito habitually views political events as organised. At the Sixth Congress in 1952, when a rank-and-file delegate, discussing moral problems, accused Petar Stambolic (now Premier) of having stolen his wife, Djilas proposed a board of inquiry. Tito cried "The enemy is in our midst!" and suggested that the outburst had been an organised provocation by the Cominform.

Gumilov

Gumilov

THE POPULARITY *of the great and gifted Russian poet Nikolai Gumilov (1886–1921) is increasing considerably. I listened enthusiastically to the praise of young Russian poets and students adressed to Gumilov. The poet is almost unknown in our country, despite the fact that with Mayakovsky, Tsvetayeva, and Yesenin, he is one of the most important Russian poets of the second decade of this century. A leader of the "acmeist" movement and husband of Anna Akhmatova, he was shot in 1921 for taking part in the counter-revolutionary conspiracy. This was the reason that this significant poet was ignored in his fatherland. In the 1952 edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia there is no mention of Gumilov's name.*

Gumilov was a life-size, completely manly person. He graduated from the Sorbonne, headed two expeditions to Africa, founded the "Russian Lion-hunting Society," and as a soldier participated in World War I and actively fought against Soviet rule. Gumilov's poetry is full of vigorous and vital energy, poetry which praises dauntless conquistadors, conquerors, sea-farers—all those who fearlessly face death day after day—and his present-day popularity with Soviet youth is very symptomatic.

With his fearless and overweening attitude during interrogations in the Petrograd Cheka, Gumilov infuriated his interrogators to such an extent that they—after having learned that Gorky had been assured by Lenin himself that Gumilov would not be shot—scurried to liquidate him. Zamyatin describes this in his essay on Gorky in the following way:

"It so happened that on my way from Moscow to Petrograd I found myself in the same carriage as Gorky.... The great Russian poet Gumilov, who had been shot several months earlier, was mentioned.... This was a man both politically and literarily alien to Gorky, but nevertheless Gorky did everything to try to save him. Gorky told me that he had already managed to get a promise in Moscow that Gumilov's life would be spared, but that the Petrograd authorities had found out about it and scurried to execute the sentence. I had never seen Gorky as shaken as that night."

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You probably know very well that I was not in the Soviet Union as a "tourist," as you wrote on several occasions [but under the cultural-exchange programme]. . . . I was not anybody's "guest," and I do not feel bound to lie about what I saw, merely out of gratitude for the hospitality I received. So what if I feel more respect towards the Russian people than towards the Soviet authorities!

I did not abuse anybody's confidence. I did not write a single word about my conversations with distinguished Russian authors without receiving their sanction for this in advance whenever it was a case of conversations without witnesses. And do not suppose that I was able to write about everything which I discussed and which I came to know. . . .

Your editorial is couched in the style of the coarsest "practice of ideological justice" from the time of A. A. Zhdanov and is aimed at the intimidation *not only, and not so much of me* [underscored by Mihajlov] but of all those who have any kind of "original" ideas.

I did not reveal any particularly new facts about the U.S.S.R. Six or seven years ago, articles were appearing in this country which wrote openly about all these things and in an even harsher form. Just think of the book by Margaret Buber-Neumann, *Under Two Dictators*, Weissberg's *Conspiracy of Silence*, Gregory Klimov's *The Terror Machine*, and so forth. That is to say, there is no question here of the *facts* which I mentioned, but rather of the *fact* that I mentioned them in an "original" (your term) fashion. The question here is that I dared *without permission* to think with my head and to look around me with my own eyes. This is a question of the fact that, in a country in which serfdom still obtains, because the agricultural workers are *administratively bound to the kolkhoz*, I devoted more attention in an "original" way to the songs which the ordinary Russian people sing than to the flashy publicity which surrounds space-rocket achievements. . . .

I am prepared at any juncture, if you will offer me space in your publication, to set out and document all my suppositions and asseverations, from scientific data about the rapid increase in alcoholism and hooliganism in the U.S.S.R. to "the mysticism from the arsenal of the Middle Ages," as my philosophy is described by the critic Miodrag Bogicevic in *Komunist* of 11 February.

I only wish to mention that one of the people who thinks like me is a well-known obscurantist of our century, who wrote the following words: "The most beautiful excitement which we can experience is mystical. This is the progenitor of all real art and science. The man to whom this excitement is foreign is no longer able to experience wonder, or to stand bewildered and in fearful admiration, just as if he were dead."

And his name is—Albert Einstein.

And another important contemporary *Marxist* figure, Lucien Goldmann, has written this: "We are . . . completely in agreement with the idea . . . that modern socialist thought has been able to thrive only within the intellectual and affective world which Christian thought and culture created."

Mr. Editor, I do not hide the fact that I consider the thought of Vladimir Solovyov, Emmanuel Mounier, Teilhard de Chardin, Aurobindo, Shestov and Berdyaev to be more human, profound and great than that of any living Marxist philosopher. I do not conceal the fact that I consider myself a Christian.

Your newspaper will not frighten me by accusing me of "anti-Communism." Believe me, I am not the only person who feels that it was *one and the same hand* which killed Garcia Lorca, Maxim Gorky, Dimitrije Tucevic and Tukhachevsky, Patrice Lumumba and Imre Nagy. I am deeply convinced that every increase in the strength of Stalinism at the same time signifies and assists the growth of neo-Nazism; and if your attitude were to gain the upper hand in Yugoslavia—however paradoxical this may seem—this would entail the *strengthening* of McCarthyism, even over there in the U.S.A.

I will take legal action against your newspaper for insulting and maliciously and consciously misleading our public.

Since I am convinced that you will not publish this letter, I am sending copies to the Editorial Boards of the Yugoslav newspapers.

Signed MIHAJLO MIHAJLOV

University Lecturer in the town of Zadar, a town which the latest edition of the Great Soviet Encyclopedia describes as "an American military base on the Mediterranean."

NONE OF THE 290 editors to whom Mihajlov sent the letter dared print it. Instead, on March 4th, the daily newspapers published for the first time Tito's speech to the prosecutors. The same day, Mihajlov was arrested in Zadar. He was to remain in prison 37 days, until April 10th.

At first, the authorities sought to prosecute Mihajlov on a charge of "hostile propaganda," the one on which Djilas was twice convicted. It soon developed, however, that there was absolutely no evidence, even remotely plausible, to suggest hostility towards *Yugoslavia*, as the law in question required. Instead, Mihajlov and Mirkovic were indicted under Article 175 of the Yugoslav Criminal Code, for "damaging the reputation of a foreign state." Mihajlov was also charged under Article 125 of the Press Law, for having mailed his manuscript (the original copy, as partially edited by *Forum*) to the Rome publisher Giovanni Volpe after *Delo* had been banned. Volpe had written of his interest in publishing a book by Mihajlov, who in response had sent several of his recent writings; but no contract had been signed.

Mirkovic, a Party member, was never arrested. Before the indictment, which was promulgated on March 26th, he defended Mihajlov, insisting that there was nothing new, special, or in any way offensive about the

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articles. Later, however, he gave the prosecutors a key statement—the claim that Mihajlov had insisted on the article's publication without any editorial changes whatsoever (a claim Mihajlov denies). The charges against Mirkovic were dropped, and he is now back at *Delo*.

THE INITIAL REACTIONS were as might have been predicted. The Yugoslav liberals waited fearfully for signs of a general "witch-hunt." The Nobel Prize-winner Ivo Andric advised them, coolly, that twenty years is a short time in history. Belgrade's two leading publishing houses rejected Miodrag Bulatovic's latest novel, *Hero on a Donkey*, although it had already been serialised in the magazine *Savremenik* (Contemporary); its view of the Italian occupation of Montenegro, essentially comic, was far from the Partisan myth. Party stalwarts informed visiting Westerners, "confidentially," that the entire affair was a "Chinese-Stalinist provocation." Other Yugoslav officials, however—some of them quite senior—frankly admitted: "They made a mistake." ("They," not "we.") At Zadar, an unsigned statement by the council of the Philosophical Faculty announced that Mihajlov had been suspended from his university post. However, someone—probably a student—also wrote on Mihajlov's office door: *"Ziveo Mihajlov! Ziveo Sloboda!"* (Long live Mihajlov, long live freedom). And, by the time he was released on parole, there were letters of support waiting for him, not only from various parts of Yugoslavia, but also from friends in the Soviet Union.

In the West, the full text of *Moscow Summer* was published in the American *New Leader*, large extracts in the *New York Times*, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, the London *Daily Mail* and other journals. Organisers of an international PEN congress scheduled for this summer at Bled began to fear it might be cancelled.

THE TRIAL TOOK PLACE in the district court of Zadar on April 29th and 30th. On its eve, the Philosophical Faculty expelled Mihajlov from the university—a few Communists had spoken against him, one woman professor had defended him, the rest had remained silent. The vote, by an open show of hands, was a foregone conclusion. However, on the morning the trial opened, most of the 110 seats in the courtroom were occupied by young faculty colleagues and students, with almost as many standing in the back of the hall or in a small gallery. They were to remain throughout the five-hour hearing the first day, packed the hall a half-hour before sentence was pronounced the next day, and throughout the proceedings maintained a grave silence which could only be interpreted as sympathy for the defendant. My impression was confirmed after the verdict, when I saw many of them come to shake his hand.

Mihajlov, the only witness, dominated the courtroom. He is a small, stocky young man; an obvious intellectual, of the type one meets as assistant editors of Western literary magazines, but modest and mild-mannered, soft in speech although "metal-hard" in content. His attorney, Dr. Ivo Glowatzky, of Zagreb, was a Central European gentleman of the old school: half-Polish, half-Croat, lean, bald, grey moustached, also deceptively quiet-spoken. He took the case, he said, "as a matter of professional conscience."

There were three judges, but only one was a professional jurist: the presiding judge, Branko Novakovic, a rather colourless figure (despite a tan tweed sports-jacket) who attempted throughout to seem calm and unemotional. The other two, lay (or "people's") judges appeared more colourful (one seemed out of a De Sica movie, the other out of a Montenegrin fresco), but neither ever said a word.

The public prosecutor, Zarko Kovacevic, a large figure, was not particularly verbose either. He read his opening statement from a typewritten manuscript (the style appeared to reflect the same astute draftsmanship one observes in Belgrade diplomatic notes), intervened only three times thereafter, and seemed rather uncomfortable in doing so. Near him sat three sun-burned figures, the best-dressed men in the hall, whom nobody could identify: some said "other judges," others said "from Belgrade," most assumed "UDBA" (Secret Police).

The prosecutor's statement paid tribute to Yugoslavia's policy of "peace-loving active coexistence," said Mihajlov had "abused the freedom of expression which exists in our country," and stressed the offending passages of *Moscow Summer* which had been specified in the indictment [all contained in the box, "The Camps"].

Judge Novakovic then began to question Mihajlov, and it swiftly became clear that the basis of his defence was truth. "Historical facts," he said, "cannot constitute an offence." Mihajlov was "aware that by presenting such facts this would not be agreeable to the party concerned," but there was nevertheless no intent to defame or belittle the Soviet Union. Some 90 per cent of the article was about literature, but one cannot write about Soviet literature without discussing the camps—which have dominated it in recent years.

Why, asked the judge, did you feel it necessary to compare Soviet with Nazi camps? "It was not a coincidence. I consider Stalinism no better than fascism, and therefore made a comparison." The same question, phrased dif-

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ferently, and an even stronger response: "Totalitarianism is always the same, no matter under what sign it appears or what social system it tends to realise."

The judge (and, later, the prosecutor) asked why Mihajlov had discussed Soviet camps *before* Stalin had come to power. "Because it is a historical fact. It may be painful but it is true." As for "genocide"—"the word corresponds to the facts about which I have been speaking." Mihajlov pointed out that the court had already rejected his documentation on the subject, but that all of it came from books available in Yugoslav libraries.

On the question of mailing his manuscript abroad, Mihajlov made three points. *1.* He had not heard that *Delo* had been permanently banned until he was already in jail, and had assumed the magazine would appeal against the temporary injunction. *2.* He had sent the *Forum*-edited manuscript, with the concentration-camp songs and "other things" excised, and including the never-published third instalment, so that it was not at all clear this was precisely *the* banned material. *3.* He had made no commitment for the publication of the article, and would not have done so once it had been definitely banned in Yugoslavia.

Dr. Glowatzky then asked Mihajlov's view on his expulsion from the Zadar faculty as "morally undesirable." Mihajlov replied that the issue was one of ideology, and "ideology cannot simply be labelled as moral or immoral." Prosecutor Kovacevic seized on this: a man with such views, he said, cannot be trusted to work with young people. "Your remark sums up your ideology. Thus, you have confessed."

The defence attorney began his plea by observing that there was not a single precedent for this case in a Croatian court. "It is not up to me," he continued, "to question the circumstances which have led to the action against Mihajlov. But it is symptomatic that the people's organs reacted only after the first article [Tito's speech] appeared in *Borba*. Only then was Mihajlov arrested."

Dr. Glowatzky traced Mihajlov's background, including the *Forum* article which had produced no legal consequences. Of the 72 pages of the *Delo* articles, he said, the indictment had specified as offensive only four sentences scattered on three pages—was this the way to go about being deliberately offensive to the Soviet state? Mihajlov had received many favourable comments on the articles (including those of Mirkovic, the responsible editor) as well as some negative comments in *Komunist* and in *Nin* (which Mihajlov is suing).

The *Delo* articles, Dr. Glowatzky continued, were far less specific than the *Forum* article or than numerous books published in Yugoslavia on Soviet forced labour. He held up a Yugoslav edition of Alexander Weissberg's *Conspiracy of Silence* (borrowed from the Zagreb library), and quoted its prefatory denunciation (1952) of Soviet "imperialism and enslavement."

> JUDGE NOVAKOVIC: "I hope you do not intend to read the whole book."
>
> DEFENCE COUNSEL: "I do not—but if the defendant has already spent 37 days in prison, surely the court can spare a few minutes to hear a few lines from this book."

Legal experts, he said, were at a loss as to how to interpret Article 175, but at least one international lawyer held that it could only be applied on the basis of reciprocity. In the Soviet legal codes, however, there was not a single article prohibiting "insult to foreign states." The only law remotely comparable in Russia prohibits "terrorist acts against representatives of foreign governments"—rather a different matter.

Summing up, Dr. Glowatzky said that Mihajlov had "felt deeply the patience and suffering of a great nation where, as Khrushchev himself said, some twelve million people have passed through the camps." The very week of this trial, he noted, the Croatian party organ *Vjesnik* had been reporting from Moscow the polemic in the Soviet Union on the role of Vishinsky, who (the paper said) provided "legalistic justification of terror and violence against people who were not guilty." Even today—a *Vjesnik* editorial had noted—no light had been shed on the trials of Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others.

"Regardless of the circumstances which surrounded the inception of this case," Dr. Glowatzky concluded, "the court in its full independence should acquit the defendant."

"THIS IS A STRANGE TRIAL," Mihajlov began his final plea, reviewing his arrest and the pre-trial hearings, and the various accusations lodged against him, from "mysticism" to irreverence towards Lenin's memory. Nevertheless, everything he had written was true, "and I shall continue to write in such a way."

People had been offended by remarks about Lenin, "but nobody would claim that Lenin patented socialism. I have said that Yugoslav decentralisation and self-management have prevented the development here of Stalinist totalitarianism, or Leninist totalitarianism."

Nothing in his views, Mihajlov declared, should be construed as anti-socialist, and went on to quota Rosa Luxemburg's original strictures on the Bolshevik Revolution. Those who said that by discussing Soviet camps he was

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defending Hitler (the gist of Tito's criticism) were, in effect, saying: "The fact that I am anti-Stalinist automatically makes me a fascist."

"If this court condemns me," Mihajlov went on, "it is also condemning historical science... because the historian will then be told what is permitted and what is not permitted to be published as historical documentation." And justice as well as truth remained to be served: "Where, when, and who among Stalin's SS-commanders and concentration-camp guards has yet been tried?" Mihajlov concluded with a quotation from Bertrand Russell.[4]

The next morning, the court ruled Mihajlov guilty on both counts. All the evidence, the judge said, "leads to the conclusion that his intention was to belittle the endeavours of the present Soviet Government in the fight against Stalinism." This was impermissible in Yugoslavia, which conducts a policy of active, peace-loving co-existence and protects the reputation of foreign countries.

The sentence was five months on each count —which the court combined into a single term of nine months, minus the 37 days already served. Mihajlov could remain at liberty pending his appeal to the Croatian Supreme Court in Zagreb.

[4] From Bertrand Russell's preface to Gustav Herling's *A World Apart* (1951): [Those] who refuse to believe the evidence of books such as Mr. Herling's are necessarily people devoid of humanity, for if they had any humanity they would not merely dismiss the evidence, but would take some trouble to look into it. Communists and Nazis alike have tragically demonstrated that in a large proportion of mankind the impulse to inflict torture exists, and requires only opportunity to display itself in all its naked horror....

"A brilliant sentence," a Western observer remarked, "long enough to satisfy the Russians and intimidate the Yugoslav liberals, not long enough to disturb the Western liberals...."

"Happily," Mihajlov had written, "Yugoslavia is not the Soviet Union." One wonders. Mihajlov's travelogue can perhaps best be compared with Victor Nekrassov's only slightly more cautious *Novy Mir* report on his journey to Italy and America. The Soviet writer was denounced by Khrushchev and Ilichev, but was never prosecuted. In Russia, of course, the cult of personality died with Stalin; in Yugoslavia, it may have gained a new lease on life.

"Smoking Cuban cigarettes and drinking Turkish coffee, surrounded by masterpieces of modern painting," Ilya Ehrenburg (who had "just flown in from Zurich, where he had stopped over on his way from Italy") told Mihajlov

> ... that he, too, in his youth, thought the same things, but that he has grown wiser, and eventually he said that I was cut out to be a fanatic—"the same as our dogmatists are, except that you stand on different ideological ground."

Perhaps. As an admirer of Dostoevsky and Solzhenitsyn, a singer of songs from concentration camps, Mihajlov may have been destined for a prison cell. Yet the most appropriate comment on the case—and the system which produced it—may well have been made a century ago by the first Serbian socialist, Svetozar Markovic (after whom the former Djilas Street in Belgrade is now named). Commenting on the piece-meal reforms of Tsar Alexander II in Russia, he wrote: "It is impossible to keep the sheep intact and the wolves satisfied."

Anatole Shub

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LETTERS

Galbraith's Reply

MR. LEON KEYSERLING [ENCOUNTER, May] is right that my article is a development of views first outlined in *The Affluent Society*. He did not care for that book for he believes that the increase in Gross National Product is the primary test of public policy. I do not differ on the value of growth; like good weather, it is a good thing to have.

But, unlike good weather, it is not hard to get. It has become the joint and largely non-controversial objective of men of all shades of opinion. And as the experience of the last two decades now shows, to concentrate on this and the level of employment leaves most urgent problems, including those of poverty, low income, and even unemployment (of the uneducated) with all of which Mr. Keyserling is rightly concerned, unsolved; and it adds quite a few new problems on its own. The urgent, difficult, and controversial question is now how we use our product—how we improve education, public services, our cities, the aesthetics of environment, and the other things of which I spoke in the article.

We owe a considerable debt of gratitude to Mr. Keyserling for the stress he placed twenty years ago on economic expansion. But like so many good men before him, he prefers to combat professional obsolescence not by the relatively easy course of keeping his ideas abreast of the times but by arguing against the need to accommodate them to change.

JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH

Harvard University

MacIntyre's "Psycho-Analysts"

I READ WITH considerable interest Alasdair MacIntyre's "The Psycho-analysts" [ENCOUNTER, May]. I am delighted that Mr. MacIntyre thinks so well of my writings. But in his criticism of psycho-analysts (or at least of some psycho-analysts) he follows them in accepting it as a natural science. So do those analysts who, like Dr. J. F. Brown, compare Freud to Newton. And so did Freud—but only occasionally. This, in my opinion, is an entirely erroneous view. If psycho-analysis is a science at all, it is a historical and not a natural science. Or to use Windelband's distinction: psycho-analysis is very much an ideographic and not a nomothetic science. Therefore, efforts to verify its theoretical structures by methods derived from natural sciences will only lead to contradiction if not confusion, some of which Mr. MacIntyre mentions.

I could not agree more with Mr. MacIntyre's remarks about the two sets of Freud's heirs, only I do not join him in believing that they are both legitimate. Here my own bias shows. I believe psycho-analysts should give up imagining themselves as natural scientists and accept as their calling the study of the inner history of individual man; psycho-analysis is a method particularly suited to this task.

Dr. Ernst Kris stressed the threefold significance of psycho-analysis: as *therapy*, as a *system of theories*, and as a new and unique *method of observing human behaviour*. I feel the last is the most important and that there is indeed an overgrowth of theory. Worse, there is even a tendency of psycho-analytic theory to encroach on psycho-analytic observations. This I suggested in *Symbolic Wounds*, where I tried to indicate the vitality of the psycho-analytic method of observation even in those instances where the dead-wood of theory tends to distort observations.

I feel what we need is a moratorium on psycho-analytic theory-building and an abandonment of efforts to prove or disprove it with scientific methods not yet germane to its nature. They ought to be replaced by most careful psycho-analytic observations; in short, by a concentration on psycho-analytic phenomenology.

BRUNO BETTELHEIM

University of Chicago

Hilaire Belloc

BERNARD BERGONZI's attack on "the Bellocian mythology" in his article [ENCOUNTER, January] on "The English Catholics" was especially welcome coming from a Catholic. Nobody who has had a Catholic upbringing will dispute the statement that "the principal image-makers of English Catholicism were undoubtedly G. K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc." F. J. Sheed (of Sheed & Ward, probably the most influential publishing company of its kind in the English-speaking world) can be quoted to substantiate this statement: "More than any other man, Belloc made the English-speaking Catholic world in which all of us live."

In view of this fact one is flogging a dead horse in drawing attention to two items in "the Bellocian mythology" which are peculiarly vicious. He was a violent anti-Semite. Two of his hagiographers, Reginald Jebb and H. B. Morton, deny this (in *Testimony to Hilaire Belloc*), but his official biographer, Speaight (Hollis & Carter), doesn't deny "his strident, exotic, anti-Semitism." Morton seems to believe that a reading of Belloc's book, *The Jews* (Constable, 1922), should dissipate any such ideas. Here are some of the views put forward in that book: "The direction, the staff of Communism is Jewish" (p. 281), and the Russian Revolution was "the perfectly explicable but deplorable exercise of vengeance by the Jews" (p. 182). Again, he writes of "the peril of Jewish domination" (p. 199), as a result of the fact that "the most important men in control of international finance were admittedly Jewish." Again, "the South Africa war, openly and undeniably provoked and promoted by Jewish interests in South Africa." And then, of course, there was the question of "deicide." Speaight quotes from a private letter: "it's their own silly fault—they ought to have let God alone" (p. 457). Dreyfus was, of course, guilty; and Einstein and Marx "stole" their theories.

Belloc admired Franco and Mussolini, and

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Life & Letters Today

Paris

PRESIDENT *de Gaulle, in a letter made public today, castigated French scientists who he said betrayed their native language by not speaking it at international scientific meetings. A Government spokesman said that the charge had been motivated by annoyance at the increasing use of English as the common language of scientists. English is the second language of most French scientists, and at international congresses it tends to be their first. French, wrote the General, is "remarkably suited by its clarity and its precision for the expression of scientific thought...."*

NEW YORK TIMES

Melbourne

THE *Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Ramsey, said it was about time the Anglican Church in Australia stopped calling itself "the Church of England." He said: "This is the Anglican Church of Australia and it should be known as that. Good Heavens, it has certainly outgrown any need for a colonial-style, mother-country title!"*

THE GUARDIAN

London

THE NEWS *that the Milan state attorney has ordered the seizure of all copies of a translation of* "Fanny Hill" *suggests that the mills of Italian justice grind slowly or intermittently. As an undergraduate [Denis Brogan writes] in Rome in the spring of 1923 ("primavera de bellezza"), I read, with interest, a notice in a bookshop window in the Corso over a copy of a translation of this classic:* "SEIZED BY THE POLICE IN MILAN LAST WEEK. BUY WHILE THERE IS YET TIME". *1923–1965!*

TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Pasadena

THE LONG *look-out for life on other planets is starting again. Dr. F. M. Johnson, a scientist from Pasadena, California, has reported to the American Physical Society that he believes intelligible signals are reaching Earth. A hazard dogging Dr. Johnson and his colleagues is the possibility of chance sequences of signals. In the same way that chimpanzees* might *type Shakespeare given enough time and paper, so the chance signals reaching Earth might form a coherent sequence for long enough to rouse expectations. In fact, the signals are considerably more likely to hit the target than the chimpanzees.*

Dr. Edward Teller, the American scientist known as the father of the H-bomb, expressed his views forcibly on the silence of our extra-terrestrial cousins. "If there is anybody up there," he said, "then where is *everybody?"*

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

London

TO BEGIN *on a hopeless note [writes Keith Waterhouse]: criticising television at all seems mildly ridiculous and somewhat inconclusive—like being handed a batch of magazines and coming out in favour of, say, D. W. Brogan in* ENCOUNTER *as against an article called "Sharpens His Razor Blades on Pyramids" in* Weekend Reveille.

QUEEN

Peking

CHINESE *intellectuals are being urged to criticise Shakespeare's plays "by means of historical materialism and the method of class analysis" in order to transform them into "beneficial" reading for present-day Chinese. A long article published in* Guangming Ribao, *Peking's daily newspaper for intellectuals, defined the attitude that should be taken towards Shakespeare in the following way: The Elizabethan poet's "bourgeois humanism" is praiseworthy in that it led to a criticism of feudalism and the "more or less dark side of the early stages of capitalist development." However, he was unable to go beyond "bourgeois individual humanism" in that "he failed to understand the class roots which produce vices in society on the one hand and was afraid of the spontaneous struggles of the masses of the people on the other."*

REUTER

London

LORD SNOW, *Parliamentary Secretary, Ministry of Technology, said the Government believed that the content of television programmes was entirely the responsibility of the two authorities, BBC and ITV. Responsibility was fairly and squarely with Lord Normanbrook and Lord Hill. In both violence and over-sexuality both services had improved since the bad period about two years ago, when things really were getting somewhat absurd—incest several nights of the week was too much.*

THE TIMES

MALCOLM X *[whose mother was half-white] never knew quite enough about himself. For all his millions of fiery words, there are those who believe he was never quite so revealing as in an uncharacteristic yet repeated slip of the tongue: "I hate every drop of black blood in my body." He meant to say* white, *of course, and he quickly corrected himself.*

NEWSWEEK

London

AMONG *the dozens of stories which Louis Fischer tells there is one that could be the text of the work. Lenin, when still in his thirties, takes a girl up a Swiss mountain. As they gaze at the view from the top the girl is uplifted and on the point of reciting Shakespeare. Her escort is lost in thought and suddenly exclaims: "The Mensheviks really mess things up." That was Lenin.*

THE TIMES

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loathed parliamentary democracy and the open society; in his book on *The Jews*, he ridicules "the old liberal nonsense which called itself 'toleration.'..."

Belloc had an astonishing virtuoso command of the English language but his influence on the world of English-speaking Catholicism as a historian and political theorist was, and *is*, wholly pernicious.

JOHN EUSTACE

South Shields
Co. Durham

Keynes and Kingsley Martin

MR. LEOPOLD LABEDZ [ENCOUNTER, May] states the exact opposite of the truth when he says that I am the only editor who has managed to conceal his political opinions. I am, on the contrary, as far as I know, the only British editor who has voluntarily revealed them. Books have been written in which they have figured largely and I have written a long article of self-revelation. Mr. Grabowski [April], again, makes the ludicrous statement that I was "the first in the field of appeasement!" On the contrary, the entire national press—was there an exception?—on the Conservative side favoured appeasement. The outstanding radical exception, apart from the *New Statesman*, was the *News Chronicle* which, if he examined its columns, would I think, be found to have made many wobbles. The reason why my truthful, but ill-timed remark about our inability to defend Czechoslovakia (after the Government had thrown away the chance of the Soviet alliance) has been given so much publicity is just because we so notoriously and savagely opposed appeasement. Our opponents, themselves almost all appeasers, seized on our remark because it was a lapse from grace.

Runciman was sent to Czechoslovakia, with the goodwill of the great majority of the press, to arrange for frontier revision, well-knowing that without the Russian alliance we could do no more to help the Czechs than we proved later able to do for the Poles. Even a politician like Duff Cooper, who resigned after Munich, broke from Chamberlain because of the manner of Munich and pretences, not because Chamberlain was prepared to revise the Sudeten frontier.

With a few exceptions—the Communists and Churchillians, including the *New Statesman*—the entire country applauded Munich. The *New Statesman* had, as I said, become Churchillian in the sense that we advocated his Grand Alliance between the democratic powers and the Soviet Union. I was myself a member of a society of which Churchill was a member and which existed to promote his cause. Why Lord Keynes should have been surprised, as Mr. Labedz suggests, to hear that I was a Churchillian at this period of my life I cannot imagine, in view of the fact that my principal controversy with Keynes, revealed in my article, arose from the fact that he supported Baldwin, Chamberlain, and appeasement, and I was in favour of collective action.

As to re-armament, we, like the rest of the Labour party, were not in favour of it, knowing that Chamberlain had long decided not to go to war and that, as Churchill pointed out, he had discarded far more arms than we could ever have made by throwing away the alliance with Russia and other League Powers who, united, might have prevented war. As it was, Chamberlain was in the end compelled to go to war with Hitler and we should have done well to be better armed. But it has escaped my critics' notice that the editors who most vociferously demanded re-armament were until the last minute not against, but in favour of, Hitler.

We were right in making the Soviet alliance the touchstone of policy and it was only because Hitler was kind enough to invade Russia instead of England that this has been obscured. It was the Soviet armies that destroyed the German armies. This must be hard for East Europeans, who have suffered much from Russia, to admit.

Both my critics seem ignorant of the climate of British opinion in the 'thirties. All England was for peace, not at any price, but at almost any price. The reasons for the Conservative reluctance to run any risk of war were different from those of the Eggheads who were long engaged in an insoluble argument about the relations of Marxism and pacifism. All papers, the *New Statesman* amongst them, inevitably made blunders and changed their minds in accordance with the daily changes of politics. But if anyone is foolish enough to judge a paper by quotations, I may perhaps quote a specimen of my own writing on March 19th, 1938, when I said that a policy "with the discipline, the conscription of wealth and of British manhood which would be necessary, can only be put forward by a broadly based Government which includes Mr. Eden, Mr. Churchill, and the Labour and Liberal leaders." I added that "no sacrifice" would be too much to make for a Government which "really intends to throw its weight on the side of democracy and against aggression," and I opposed a war such as Mr. Chamberlain might muddle us into. Maybe I stuck to the policy too long. Doubts disappeared with Winston in charge. But what is the use of making attacks by selecting quotations on the basis of ignorance and prejudice?

KINGSLEY MARTIN

Hilltop, Rodmell,
Lewes, Sussex

"Verdict on Smoking"

DR. R. J. C. HARRIS [ENCOUNTER, May], like your previous eminent correspondents, fails to understand the main point I was trying to make.

They subscribe to the hypothesis that smoking causes lung cancer. This is a good theory in the sense that it would account admirably for many of the known facts. It does however require proof. There are two varieties of proof offered. That relating to direct experimental evidence is strong but not conclusive. The main burden, therefore, rests on the indirect statistical proof. This, however, has been criticised very severely by many professional statisticians of the stature of Sir Ronald Fisher, J.

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Berkson and J. Yerushalmy, on such grounds as self-selection of cases, errors of statistical inference (the Yerushalmy paradox, the Berkson paradox), etc. These criticisms demand an answer before we can accept the statistical proof as convincing, and in the absence of such an answer I still maintain that it is scientifically wrong to brush aside these objections and claim virtual certainty for the conclusion. It is noteworthy that neither Dr. Scott nor Sir Robert Platt or Dr. Harris so much as mention these criticisms made by eminent and highly respected statisticians and biometricians concerning a matter which is very much within their competence, and outside that of physicians and physiologists.

In this whole matter I myself am only repeating these criticisms; I did not originate them. As far as conclusions go, I stand much closer to Dr. Scott, Platt, and Harris than to Fisher and Berkson; the latter would reject the whole theory out of hand and apparently believe that there is no case to be answered, and that the verdict should be "not guilty." My own view is that on the contrary there is a very strong case, but that this case at the moment is circumstantial and not absolutely conclusive. I would be perfectly prepared to be convinced that the case was proven if only it could be shown that the criticisms made on statistical grounds were ill-judged. As far as I can tell they do raise problems and difficulties and cannot just be buried in silence.

Dr. Harris tells me that I am not aware that my lung cancer-personality relationship theory has been carefully examined. This firm statement, based no doubt on extra-sensory perception, is of course quite false; in my new book on "*Smoking, Health, and Personality*" I have quoted the report he mentions in considerable detail, as well as reprinting tables and figures from it. However, as most of the evidence I am concerned with had not appeared when this report was written, the discussion he refers to is not really terribly relevant. I wish Dr. Harris well in prosecuting his cancer research; no one would be more delighted than I in having direct, positive, and conclusive proof of this theory. Even if such proof were forthcoming it would still be obvious, and I am glad that he seems to agree, that psychological and constitutional studies would be more necessary than ever, and I can only hope that they will receive more attention and support than they have received in the past.

H. J. EYSENCK

The Maudsley Hospital,
London

Mon Again, Off Again

YOU HAVE HAD more than one thing on Mon in your sheet (in fact, two [Andrew Boyd, ENCOUNTER, March 1964; Douglas Busk, January 1965]) but both of them said not one word about the place (God's own) which could add lots to the Mon tongue—real great stuff—the U.S. It is e'er so: you guys seem to think us folks have no right to call our tongue "English." You scoff at our Ph.D. style, week in, week out. You say it is full of mush, long words, that it fails to be clear and lacks wit. (True, things are not so bad as once they were: we tend to get a fair shake in the *T.L.S.*, say.) But that we are apt, in fact great in Mon, has not been made plain. Was it not Tom Paine (one of ours) who said, "These are the times that try men's souls"? Our slang is rich; we say things with a pith not known to you. You moan of "brain drain" (a good Mon term), and hint that when we in the U.S. say a good thing, it must have been one of your men, now here flush with dough, who said it. Not so: W. von Braun ain't English, now is he? You should shake hands cross the sea, not cling to pride that is to the point no more: when it comes to terse talk, we got it all over you. You crack the old joke—you know!—*re* "disestablishmentarianism," but it takes a U.S. wit to make this a Mon term: "pro Church." All states rise and fall, and now it is your turn to see the grim sign on the wall of time: U.S. speech will make Mon rich: there is more good Mon twixt New York and L.A. than is dreamt of in your Red Brick Us. And so, dear Sir (as you chaps would put it), I am, yours, and nuts to you.

PETE GAY

Columbia University,
New York City

Hitler & Stalin

I HAVE READ with great interest Leopold Labedz' article [ENCOUNTER, December] on the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of twenty-five years ago. The reasons are brilliantly exposed why even now official Soviet historiography clings to the falsifications of Stalin's era, and still withholds the truth about his opportunism which led to the agreement with Hitler. Both the Soviet people and the entire world paid a high price for Stalin's mistakes.

But some internal aspects of Stalin's policy in the 'thirties were not touched upon. May I point out the following? In 1933, immediately after Hitler's seizure of power, I was at a meeting of the so-called "Middle European Secretariat" of the *Comintern* Executive Committee (ECCI) in Moscow. I listened to a detailed *exposé* by W. Knorin who tried to justify the caution with which the Soviet Government handled the situation in Germany. He explained the "general strategy" of the USSR with regard to the complicated task that the new conditions created for the Communist parties. He quoted Stalin as having summarised the aim of Soviet policy "during the next ten years" in the following terms: "to make certain that the fire in the West should start before the fire in the East. . . ."

This illuminates the sharp political turn against the Polish Republic—and especially the persecutions of Polish Communists (culminating in the dissolution of the Polish Communist Party and the assassination of all its leaders in the years 1937–8). Whatever was said about this action (which has been described as based on "provocation" only a few years after Stalin's death), it can be fully understood only in connection with the preparation for a *rapprochement* between Hitler and Stalin.

Y. BERGER

Tel Aviv

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Andrew Shonfield is Director of Studies at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London. He is the former Economic Editor of the *Observer*. Among his books are *British Economic Policy Since the War* (Penguin, 1958), and *The Attack on World Poverty* (Chatto & Windus). This article is a study from a book on *Modern Capitalism* which he is currently completing; it will be published for the Institute by Oxford University Press. . . .

Nirad C. Chaudhuri is the author of one of the most brilliant and unforgettable Indian books of our time, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, published by Macmillan in 1951. *A Passage to England* was published in 1959. Chatto & Windus will shortly be publishing his new book—*The Continent of Circe*—of which this present ENCOUNTER article forms a part. . . .

George Steiner, a Fellow of Churchill College, Cambridge, is the author of *Tolstoy or Dostoevsky* (1959) and *The Death of Tragedy* (1961). Among his contributions to ENCOUNTER are essays on "Marxism & the Literary Critic" (November 1958), "Norman Mailer" (December 1961), "F. R. Leavis" (May 1962), "Elias Canetti" (July 1962), and "Hans Mayer" (April 1964). . . .

Villy Sørensen is a young Danish writer, whose first book, *Strange Stories*, was published by Secker and Warburg in 1959, with an introduction by Angus Wilson. "The Two Inventors" was translated by Paula Hostrup-Jessen. . . .

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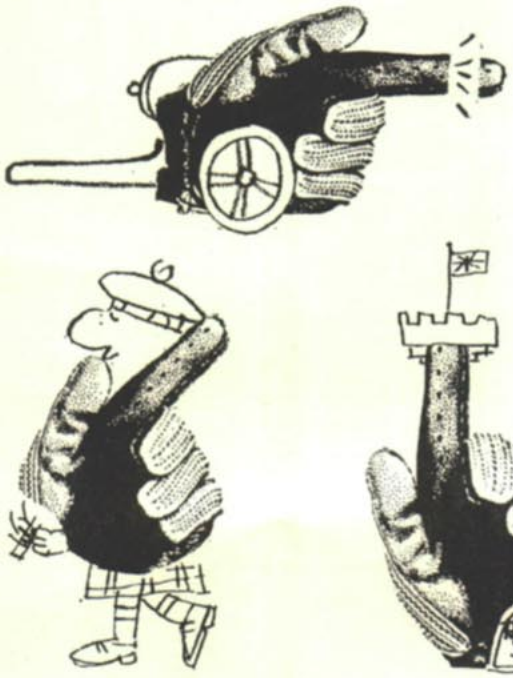

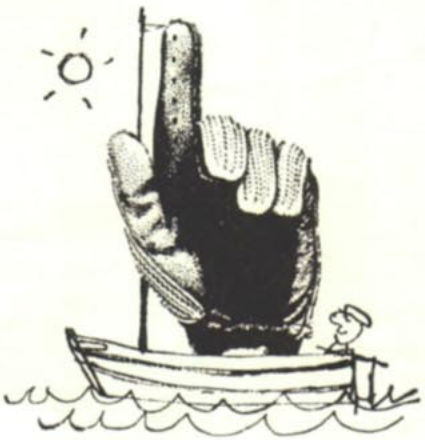

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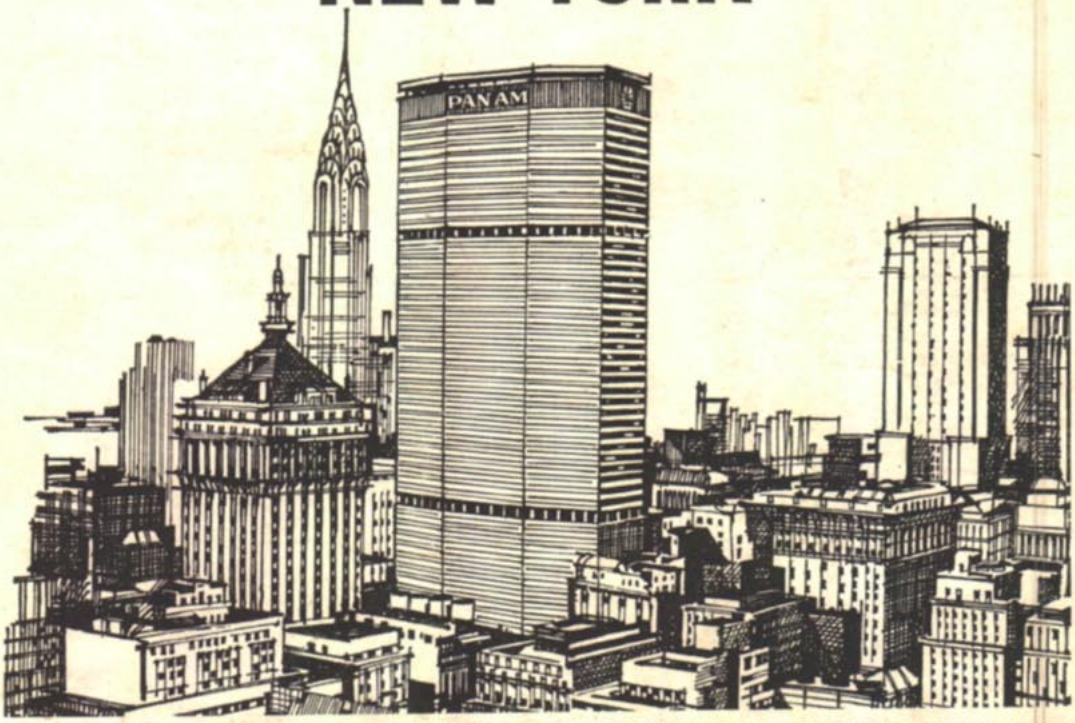

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